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Racial Supremacy

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RACIAL SUPREMACY

BEING

STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

BY

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"PATRIOTISM AND ETHICS"
"POVERTY: ITS GENESIS AND EXODUS"
ETC.

"What is Empire but the Predominance of Race?"

LORD ROSEBERRY

EDINBURGH: GEO. A. MORTON, 42 GEORGE STREET

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., LTD.

1905

Ac. No.	4643
Class	
Author	
Title	
Editor	
Subject	Me
Notes	Me
Remarks	✓

Prefatory Note

THE present volume has its origin in a series of articles contributed to the *Westminster Review*, but they have undergone such extensive revision and expansion as to justify the result being regarded as a new work. Whilst each of the studies is substantially independent of the others, their dominant thesis is the same, they are united by a continuity of purpose, and taken collectively they embody an attempt to present a fairly comprehensive survey of modern Imperialism.

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Racial Supremacy

I

IMPERIALISM: ITS NATURE AND PRODUCTS

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF MODERN IMPERIALISM

THE advance of Imperialism during the present generation, at first more or less fitful, but very pronounced in the last two decades, is probably the most important sign of the times, and one of ominous political portent.

Eight years ago Lord Rosebery uttered some weighty words on the subject, and the fact that his Imperialist instincts have since then developed into a dominant passion, and that he seems to have disregarded his own counsels, gives them added force. For the last twenty years, he intimated, and still more for the last twelve, we had been laying our hands with almost frantic eagerness on every commendable tract of territory adjacent to our own or otherwise desirable; we had during the later period added to our Empire twenty-two areas as large as that of the United Kingdom itself; with the result, first, that we had excited to an almost intolerable degree the envy of other colonising

nations, and must reckon, not on their active benevolence, but on their active malevolence; and, secondly, that we had acquired so enormous a mass of territory that it would be years before this undigested empire could be consolidated, filled up, settled, and civilised—the admirable moral which he deduced being that, until this had been accomplished, our foreign policy must inevitably be a policy of peace.¹

The moral, however, has been ignored; and during the period which has elapsed since it was drawn, we have effected the conquest of the Soudan, and have in South Africa, after a long and costly struggle, added to our undigested Empire another area considerably larger than that of the United Kingdom—presumably on the principle that we cannot have too much of a good thing. For the prevailing assumption seems to be that empire is a good thing; Lord Rosebery himself apparently did not suggest it was otherwise; he merely uttered a warning against its too rapid extension, and his later pronouncements clearly show that in itself he regards empire with fervent admiration. And for some time past we have had other prominent members of that political party which was supposed especially to stand for freedom and government by consent conspicuously labelling themselves Imperialists, and actively supporting a policy of subjugation and government by force.

All this indicates a distinct change in public sentiment within a comparatively recent period; for,

¹ *Speech at Edinburgh*, October 9, 1896.

although the British Empire is fairly venerable, we for long had little desire to add to our territory, and even our Colonies were at one time looked upon as burdens. Mr Disraeli, it will be remembered, referred to them as those wretched Colonies which were a millstone round our necks¹; and it is a curious illustration of the irony of fate that it should have been reserved for him to have given birth to what may be termed modern Imperialism. It was the Earl of Beaconsfield who added the appellation of the Cæsars to the titles of the Crown; it was under his *régime* that the great god Jingo became an object of popular adoration; it was he who plunged us into war with Afghanistan to secure a "scientific frontier"; and it was he who first added the Transvaal to the Queen's dominions.

In 1880, however, the new spirit received a decided check, owing chiefly to the fact that we had a Gladstone with us then. A born leader of men, with an intensely fascinating personality, and exercising a moral and intellectual influence almost unique, he denounced Imperialism in no unmeasured terms, and preached the equality of nations as a guiding principle of foreign policy; and he carried the vast majority of his countrymen with him. He did not succeed in absolutely crushing the opposing battalions; at times they were too strong even for him, and impelled him on occasions to actions reluctantly taken against his own judgment; but during his reign a much less aggressive spirit prevailed, whilst his subsequent zeal in fighting the cause

¹ See *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Malmesbury, vol. i. p. 342, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1884.

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of Ireland operated to divert the forces of Imperialism into another channel.

From the time, however, that Mr Gladstone's active career terminated, the policy of "expansion," as it is euphemistically termed, has been steadily growing. Its rapid development of late years is largely due to one masterful man, not long passed away, who was determined to play the Imperialistic card for all he was worth; a man of enormous resources, indomitable will and unflagging energy, Mr Cecil Rhodes. In Mr Chamberlain, a personage of less solid parts, but possessing the dangerous faculty of arousing and manipulating popular passion, he found a willing coadjutor; and with the one organising the "plan of campaign" in South Africa and the other marshalling the forces at home, Imperialism became absolutely rampant. The dominant spirit of the two men, however, although they have both been partly influenced by the same sentiments, has not, judging by their career and public utterances, been identical; and to appreciate the distinction between them in this respect, and to understand the factors which make for Imperialism, it is necessary to analyse the sentiment, first ascertaining what it is.

IMPERIALISM DEFINED AND ANALYSED

Imperialism is the spirit of empire, so that we have to look to the signification of the latter word in order to arrive at a definition. And that word simply means, rule, dominion, sway—empire is, to quote Lord Rosebery once more, "the predomi-

nance of race."¹ Imperialism, therefore, is the spirit of rule, ascendancy, or predominance; the rule of one race or people by another race or people, involving, of course, the subjection of the former to the latter. "Not the derivation of the word only, but all its uses and associations, imply the thought of predominance—imply a correlative subordination. Actual or potential coercion of others, individuals or communities, is necessarily involved in the conception."²

From this it will be seen that the term, which is often very loosely and vaguely used, is sometimes so inaccurately employed as to be positively misleading. The point is all-important, since, while every one has a right to his own definition, the popular defence of Imperialism will generally be found to afford an illustration of the fallacy arising from the use of a term in two distinct and even antagonistic senses. Thus, when we speak of the "British Empire," we have in our minds all the dominions of the Crown, which comprise on the one hand our self-governing Colonies and on the other our arbitrarily governed dependencies; and having intimated that the Colonies are prosperous and contented, we proceed to argue that empire is therefore good, and triumphantly conclude that we are justified in subjugating and ruling other races. Obviously we are here employing the same term to describe two totally different things. We

¹ *Inaugural Address* as Lord Rector of Glasgow University, November 16, 1900.

² Herbert Spencer, *Facts and Comments*, London, Williams & Norgate, 1902, p. 112.

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may, if we like, ignoring the etymological significance of the word, define Imperialism as the principle of autonomy under one titular head ; but if we once give it this connotation, we are precluded from using it in its appropriate derivative sense as meaning the principle of predominance or rule from without ; and since the two principles come into sharp conflict, it is clear that by establishing the one is sound and beneficial we are going a long way towards demonstrating the other is not. But by using the one term to describe the two principles we successfully bamboozle the "man in the street", who is incapable of logical analysis, and he honestly believes that Imperialism is a good thing, because, forsooth ! autonomy is a good thing. The Imperialist nearly always points with pride to Australia and Canada as instances of the beneficence of empire, and on the strength of this proceeds to defend aggressive expansion and arbitrary rule ; in other words he actually seeks to justify government by force by appealing to instances of government by consent, and by a simple ambiguity of terms he often deludes himself, and generally deludes others, into arriving at conclusions which the most elementary acquaintance with the art of reasoning would suffice to show are palpably absurd. Confronted with the fact that the vast majority of the subjects of the Crown are alien races absolutely ruled by the dominant Power, and fresh from an ostentatious tour through two large provinces but recently forcibly annexed, Mr Chamberlain calmly assures us that "the new conception of Empire is of a voluntary organization, based on community of

interests and community of sacrifices, to which all should bring their contribution to the common good."¹

Of course, the truth is that our large self-governing Colonies are not instances of empire at all (unless it be with regard to the position they themselves occupy towards the aborigines); there is no question of "racial predominance" as between us and them; and whatever evidence they afford of prosperity and contentment, so far from supporting the contentions of Imperialists, tends to deprive such contentions of any value. These Colonies are not ruled by us; they neither receive their laws from us nor pay tribute to us; and, although united to us by the ties of kinship and affection, they are, as Mr Chamberlain has himself pointed out, independent sister nations.² They remain in amity with us precisely because we do not attempt to rule them. We did once endeavour to coerce a Colony, and we lost it; we have recently imposed our will upon a Colony, and so far as loyalty is concerned we have lost that also, and may think ourselves fortunate should this ultimately prove to be the limit of the loss. Certain it is that if the processes of Imperialism were applied either to Australia or Canada, they would go the way of the American States.³

¹ *Speech at Mansion House, London*, March 20, 1903. Even a man like Sir R. Giffen is betrayed into the same fallacy—due to the same vital misconception of the facts—for he intimates that we are all Imperialists to-day because we have been accustomed to the idea of an Empire united by the bonds of affection, all the different units being practically independent. *Speech at Haywards Heath*, June 4, 1904.

² *Speech in the House of Commons*, April 3, 1900.

³ "My policy is not to force our Colonies—that is hopeless, they are as independent as we are—but to meet everything they do." Mr Chamberlain at *Birmingham*, May 15, 1903.

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If we wish for instances of empire, we must look, not to our self-governing Colonies, which after all, measured by population, only comprise about four per cent. of the territories of the Crown, but to those vast regions which we do in fact govern, and notably to India. Empire we have, and that in abundance, for it amounts to nearly a quarter of the inhabited globe; whilst almost eighty-five per cent. of those over whom the Union Jack waves, or ninety-five per cent. of those outside the United Kingdom, are subject to us, and in most cases absolutely ruled and taxed by us, and have but scant share in their own government.¹ Here then we find in active operation the principle of ascendancy, with its correlative principle of subordination; here we get "predominance of race"; here we have Imperialism in action. And it is in the light of this veritable Empire, and not of the federation of autonomous States, that the spirit of the age must be regarded.

Now if we analyse Imperialism, we shall find it consists almost exclusively of two ingredients; tracing it to its source, we see that it proceeds in the main from the spirit of pride and the spirit of greed. With some, no doubt, there is an honest belief that it makes for the progress of the world; but this is rather the result of a desire to justify their creed than the source of its inspiration. And either pride or greed may preponderate. With the capitalist class and mining magnates of South Africa the latter spirit is the more powerful, as it probably was with their colossus the late Mr Rhodes.

¹ See page 214.

With Mr Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery and the average Englishman, the former spirit chiefly prevails. Both classes, however, are to some extent influenced by both sentiments ; and it is merely a question of degree. Thus Mr Rhodes had undoubtedly the keenest appreciation of power ; the acquisition of wealth, indeed, with him ultimately became largely subservient to ambitious aims, but he always had a lively perception of the value of money ; and, whilst setting himself to acquire riches, he was seldom unduly punctilious in the pursuit of his objects. On the other hand, neither Mr Chamberlain nor Lord Rosebery disdains to appeal to the trading instinct ; but this is not a personal or dominant factor with them, and it is by a feeling of national pride that they are mainly animated. To Mr Rhodes the British flag was a most valuable commercial asset ; to Mr Chamberlain it is the symbol of sovereignty. With the capitalist class the anxiety is to secure new markets as a means of increasing trade and enhancing profits : their Imperialism has been aptly denominated "Emporialism."¹ With the masses of the people, although they have some vague fallacious idea that empire promotes their material interests, it is the sense of racial superiority which most powerfully prompts a desire to dominate.

To this sentiment of pride is traceable the fact that when a man of the type of Mr. Chamberlain is in power, Imperialism inevitably becomes rampant. For he has only to tickle our vanity and appeal to our *amour propre*, and we at once rise to the occasion. Behold the omnipotent British nation !

¹ *Liberalism and the Empire*, London, R. Brimley Johnson, 1900, p. 4.

Is not this great Babylon that we have built by the might of our power and for the honour of our majesty? Are not we a chosen race, the modern Israel, called of God, going forth conquering and to conquer? Shall we be insulted; shall we be defied; shall not our enemies lick the dust? Beware how you tread on the tail of the British lion! We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too. One Englishman can always beat three (or is it six?) Frenchmen. We'll tell the envious foreign stock our empire is the earth. And so on. In short, we must be supreme. And then—when our supremacy is acknowledged, we will confer the inestimable boon of British government, the best of all possible governments for the best of all possible worlds.

Imperialism thus becomes the deification of brute force. Only by force can empire, as a rule, be created; only by force can empire, as a rule, be maintained. "Subject races, or subject societies, do not voluntarily submit themselves to a ruling race or ruling society; their subjection is nearly always the effect of coercion."² And there is this to be said about force, that you cannot argue with it, you cannot appeal to it. It has neither head nor heart, it is outside reason and it is outside morals—it can only be met by force. And when Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of *war*—with the result, the aphorism of Solomon notwithstanding, that the battle is usually to the strong; or in other words, that might triumphs. It is no doubt a comforting doctrine that right always prevails in the end, but

¹ *Facts and Comments* (footnote, p. 5), p. 113.

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unfortunately it is not true. If it were, Poland to-day would be a separate State, the population of Armenia and Macedonia would be somewhat larger than it is, and the British Empire would be somewhat smaller.

IMPERIALISM AS A DEMORALISING INFLUENCE

But whilst it is not by the triumph of right over might that retribution invariably comes, nevertheless retribution does come; and perhaps its most common and most disastrous form is seen in the demoralisation of the people. They may succeed in subjugating others, but they pay a heavy price in their own degradation.

No nation can engage in what Mr Herbert Spencer calls "political burglary"¹ without undergoing what he aptly terms "re-barbarization."² For the greater part of three recent years the whole energies of England were concentrated upon an Imperialistic war; that is to say a war of aggression, of conquest, of annexation; a war admittedly and designedly for empire. And what has been the effect upon the British people? Time was when England was the home of freedom and the pioneer of progress. But under the baneful influence of Imperialism all this has been changed; freedom has been stifled and progress arrested. It is not that the people have become *immoral*; it is that they have been *demoralised*. It is not that they deliberately embarked upon a career they knew to

¹ *The Principles of Ethics*, vol. i. p. 257.

² *Facts and Comments* (footnote, p. 5), p. 122.

be wrong ; on the contrary the vast majority of them honestly believed they were right ; it is that their moral judgment was perverted and their moral standard lowered, so that what they formerly regarded as wrong they then regarded as right. And this is a far greater calamity. The man who realises that the excessive use of stimulants is a bad thing, but who nevertheless is to his sorrow occasionally betrayed into drunkenness, is on a higher moral plane than the man who has so accustomed himself to perpetual tipping as to regard it as a perfectly legitimate and normal procedure. And there is more hope for a nation which, under the influence of temporary passion, knowingly breaks its moral code, than for a nation which debases its moral code and mistakes that debased code for the true standard.

If any one had prophesied a few years ago that Great Britain would have written such history as was penned in blood since the outbreak of the South African War, the average Englishman might well have retorted, " Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing ? " If any other nation had written such history, the average Englishman would, possibly with " unctuous rectitude," have spoken in no unmeasured terms of such depravity. Yet not only has the history been written, but—and this is the pertinent point—the majority of Englishmen are unconscious that it indicates any moral guilt or culpability.

Let a few of the leading facts be recalled—they suggest that Christianity had become a dead letter,

ethics powerless, civilisation a delusion. Men were demoniacal in their animosity, gloried in revenge, and gloated over carnage. A free press promulgated slander and falsehood, and advocated the slaughter of prisoners of war. A brave enemy was denounced in such terms as "banditti, filibusterers and ruffians"; and a revolting official proclamation treated them as criminals. Farms and homesteads were wantonly and insanely destroyed, until nearly the whole territory (now our territory by what Sir Conan Doyle calls the "right" of conquest¹) was laid waste.² Men were threatened with expatriation for resisting aggression; women were placed on short rations (which in plain English means half starved) because their husbands refused to surrender. Captured foes were arraigned before military tribunals composed of their enemies, and then shot in cold blood; "rebels" were hanged like felons when the ties of race and their sense of justice proved stronger than their allegiance to a despotic power; and the "infernal atrocity" was committed of compelling their relatives and friends to witness the ghastly scene, presumably that the iron might enter into their souls. And, finally, some fifteen thousand little children were immolated on the altar of empire, a holocaust which might put pagans to shame, but for which the fatalist's plea that "war is war" sufficed with a Christian nation

¹ *The War in South Africa; its Causes and Conduct*, p. 10. London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1902.

² "When Lord Milner took over from the military the government of the country, the country itself was a wilderness. . . There was scarcely left in the land anything but blockhouses and entanglement wires." The Colonial Secretary, *Speech at Hotel Cecil, London*, June 10, 1904.

whose Master reserved his sternest denunciations for those who should offend against these little ones.

Yet—and herein we reach the climax—despite this grim catalogue of horrors, we were told on all hands that never was a war waged with greater humanity! In other words, the nation's moral fibre was so warped that it was unconscious of any guilt attending upon deeds from which under normal conditions it would intuitively revolt. There was no hypocrisy in the case; the people did believe the war had been conducted with humanity, and probably still believe it; and it is this conviction which is the evidence of their demoralisation. For no civilised being could possibly regard these things as consistent with humanity unless his moral judgment had been perverted. The tyrant's plea of necessity is intelligible, as coming from a tyrant; but then the candid tyrant does not prate about humanity. England, however, does not intend to be tyrannical; she does believe in humanity, but, possessed by the demon of Imperialism, her moral vision is so distorted that she can no longer distinguish between right and wrong. And those who retain the normal vision must, when they see how it is possible for a nation to fall from her high estate, be filled with a feeling of unutterable despair, and at times almost irresistibly tempted to enquire, "Who shall show us any good?"

The good, however, we are told, is to come. Order will evolve out of chaos; Briton and Boer will eventually settle down in life-long amity; and peace, prosperity, and contentment will once more abound. Yes, we are all of us familiar with the

Jesuitical plea ; but the answer to it, in a word, is that it is not true. Imperialism does not produce paradises, and if it did, the inquiry might well be made whether any man worthy of the name could find joy in a paradise erected on the graves of women and children and cemented with the blood of the bravest and the best. But Imperialism cannot produce paradises, though it can produce pandemoniums. In South Africa we have suppressed two Republics, from one of which even we might not have disdained to take lessons in the art of government, and the other of which has been described by one who lived under it for years as an almost ideal democracy.¹ And the incidental result was that for the time being we stamped out self-government in our own Colonies, alienated half the white population, and converted loyal subjects into open or secret rebels ; so that a war, pursued for the acquisition of territory and the conversion of aliens into unwilling subjects of the Crown, ultimately developed into one for the retention of territory and the subjugation of previously loyal subjects of the Crown. A policy attended with such results (and it required no remarkable prescience to foresee them, and they were, indeed, not obscurely hinted at by Mr Chamberlain in 1896²) can best be described in language Mr Gladstone once applied to another instance of incompetent statesmanship—"it is an insane policy." Only by its absolute reversal, only by the frank abandonment of racial predominance and the establishment of autonomous institutions, will South

¹ Mr E. B. Rose. See page 73.

² *Speeches in the House of Commons*, February 13 and May 8.

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Africa be ultimately saved, and some measure of gladness restored to that unhappy country, and Great Britain relieved of an intolerable incubus. Good, as the result of our evil-doing, we shall look for in vain ; all that can be hoped for is a gradual recovery from the ill that has been wrought.

In the meantime, we ourselves are reaping what we have sown. Never in modern history has political morality been at so low an ebb, honour disregarded by statesmen, and chicanery unblushingly practised. An impetus has been given to crime, and there is a general laxity of national conduct. Our influence for good has been weakened ; we have forfeited the right to criticise other States ; when we remonstrate against the devastation of Macedonia we are bidden to look to the Transvaal ; the respect which rectitude always commands is no longer largely ours. There has been a paralysis of the forces which make for progress ; retrogression is the order of the day ; the noblest characteristics are held in subjection, and political charlatanism and Hooliganism are rampant.

In short, it comes back to this, that the lust of conquest has resulted in moral decadence, and initiated a process of "re-barbarization."

IMPERIALISM THE BANE OF SUBJECT RACES

Thus much for Imperialism in its aggressive aspects, and more especially in its pernicious influence upon the dominant race ; let us now contemplate it in, what may be termed, its normal aspects, and

more particularly in its baneful effects upon the subservient race. What does it accomplish, when a people, having been definitely subjugated, is permanently governed by the victors? And in answering this question we shall find that further light is incidentally thrown upon the Jesuitical plea already referred to, and what small warrant those who contend that a beneficent end justifies drastic means have for their preliminary assumption that the end will prove to be beneficent.

The most prominent and pertinent instance of the effect of the government of one race by another race is found in India. Here we have (apart from the Native States under our suzerainty) an enormous territory, with more than 230 millions of people, absolutely ruled by an alien Power of about one-ninth the area and with less than one-fifth of the population. Here, therefore, if anywhere, ought we to be able to ascertain whether or not empire, when once established, is a good thing.

Now if one nation is ever to govern another beneficently, obviously the first requisite is knowledge—knowledge of the country, of the people, and of their peculiar requirements—whilst the second is a lively concern for the welfare of the governed. Yet what is the position of the overwhelming majority of Englishmen with regard to India? It is not too much to say that it is a position of profound ignorance coupled with profound indifference.¹ Whatever

¹ "I sometimes think that the most remarkable thing about British rule in India is the general ignorance that prevails about it in England. . . . The average Englishman is much more interested in the latest football or cricket match, in the motor trials, or in wrestling encounters

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amount of interest the average man may take in home or foreign politics, it is probable that from one year's end to another he does not bestow more than a passing thought upon our Indian Empire; he is content to accept it as being—in the terms of the grandiloquent phrase—"the brightest jewel in the diadem of the Crown." This in a democratic country is sufficiently significant, since if the people are apathetic despotism is absolute. India, in fact, is oligarchically, if not autocratically, ruled. Parliament shares the general supineness. On the rare occasions when the affairs of this vast Empire are brought under the notice of the House of Commons, the bulk of the members are generally conspicuous by their absence, and the discussion is left to the Secretary of State and a few valiant men who have the welfare of the subject races at heart. The former is invariably imbued with the usual official optimism concerning British rule, and, if he be thoroughly acquainted with the actual condition of the country, he manages to conceal his knowledge with remarkable skill. Only one deduction can be made—it is impossible for India to be well governed. On *a priori* reasoning, there is no escape from this conclusion; but let the conclusion be brought to the test of induction.

What do the facts show? Simply that India is ruled in our interests rather than in hers. Years ago

than he is with the greatest responsibility that has been undertaken by his fellow-countrymen that any nation on the face of the earth has ever known." Lord Curzon, *Speech at the Guildhall, London, July 20, 1904.*

Ruskin pointed out that every mutiny, every danger, every terror, every crime occurring under our Indian legislation arose directly out of our native desire to live on the loot of India;¹ and one of the recent writers on the subject, Mr William Digby, C.I.E., intimates that the plunder is proceeding far more outrageously to-day.² It is a terrible indictment which he frames, and no substantial answer to it has appeared. The officials responsible to Parliament for India have self-complacently enunciated an admirable criterion of good government, one which all will accept, and with which Mr Digby starts. Sir Henry Fowler stated that the question was whether English rule "has or has not promoted the general prosperity of the people of India, whether India is better or worse off by being a province of the British Crown—that is the test." And said Lord George Hamilton: "I admit at once that if it could be shown that India has retrograded in material prosperity under our rule we stand self-condemned, and we ought no longer to be trusted with the control of that country."

Adopting this test, Mr Digby sets himself to show India has under our *régime* been steadily growing poorer, until it seems that the irreducible minimum has been reached. Basing his case on the Blue Books and official statistics, disclaiming all responsibility for the facts he cites, and intimating that all he does is to use the material which the Government of India

¹ Lectures on the Pleasures of England (1884): Lecture III. *Studies in Ruskin*, by E. T. Cook, M.A., London, George Allen, 1890.

² *Prosperous British India, a Revelation from Official Records*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1901.

and the Secretary of State supply, he undertakes three distinct analyses and presents us with a comparison as regards average income, taxation and famines. As to the first, his position is that whilst in 1850 the average income (according to a non-official estimate) was twopence per head per day, and in 1882 (according to an official estimate) three-halfpence per head per day, it was in 1900 (according to an analytical examination of all sources of income) less than three-farthings, or so far as the bulk of the people are concerned less than a half-penny. To be more precise, he makes the present annual income of India £1, 2s. 4d. per head¹ if equally divided, but as a very large proportion of the total goes to the wealthy classes (numbering rather more than a million) the average for the remainder (230 millions) is about 13s. per annum—and if we contrast this with the average British income of £43 per head per annum, or even with the average income of about £20 per head of the manual labour class, we get an indication of the “prosperity” of India. But this 13s. per annum is gross income, that is to say, it is subject to the claims of the Government; and the next point is that such income is taxed to the extent of twenty per cent., thereby reducing it by at least 2s. 6d., whilst the average taxation on the total average income of £1, 2s. 4d. works out at 3s. 3d. or about fifteen per cent., so that the wealthy (as usual) contribute less proportionately to their means. In England we grumble at being taxed (by a Government of our own election) to the extent of eight or ten per cent., and it is scarcely necessary

¹ The official estimate is £2.

to point out that even the same percentage of taxation presses with enormously greater severity upon very small incomes; so that we here get a second significant indication of the "prosperity" of India. In these circumstances, that severe famines should periodically occur, and that they should increase in intensity, is inevitable—it would be miraculous if they did not. But the tale which is told in this connection is simply appalling, being to the effect that, whilst in the first half of last century $1\frac{1}{2}$ million lives were lost, in the next quarter 5 million deaths were recorded, whilst in the last quarter the estimated loss reached the awful total of 26 millions. Here, then, we have a third startling indication of the "prosperity" of India. And, as we have seen, Lord George Hamilton—expressly challenged by Mr Digby to disprove his statements and figures—has said:—"If it can be shown that India has retrograded under our rule, we stand self-condemned, and we ought no longer to be entrusted with the control of that country."

But will it be urged that this is too severe a test—that if this retrogression be proved, it ought to be demonstrated to have taken place, not merely under our rule, but because of our rule? Is a Government answerable for the poverty of its subjects, and are not famines traceable to a *vis major*, or, in pious language, to the "act of God?" Let us see. In the first place, it seems tolerably clear that we cannot evade responsibility for taxation—for levying on our impoverished Indian subjects an impost more than twice as high as that levied upon ourselves—who are comparatively opulent. But why are the people impoverished, why are the

famines so frequent and so intense, why do millions periodically die for lack of food? And the answer is, because famine or no famine, the grain goes out of the country with automatic regularity in order to pay tribute to England. "India must be bled," said Lord Salisbury years ago, and then proceeded to give sage advice as to the parts to which the lancet should be directed, at the same time intimating that much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent¹—and this is truer than ever to-day. Continues Mr Digby, "during the last thirty years of the century the average drain cannot have been far short of £30,000,000 per year"; and, as conveying some idea of what this means relatively, it may be said that, taking the figures (excluding those of treasure) for 1898-9 they show that the exports for which there is no "direct equivalent" are about six-fifteenths of the total, the latter being 75 millions as against 45½ millions imports.² Even these imports seem to be of little benefit to the people, for they are practically absorbed by "Anglostan"—"the region to which the roseate statements in the Viceregal and State Secretary's speeches refer"—and not by Hindustan. The fact that there is a comparatively large importation of the precious metals is sometimes quoted as a proof of prosperity, but it is really an additional indication of adversity; for treasure has to be paid for in kind, a large portion of it is required for coinage and wastage,

¹ Minute, 26/4/1875. Ret. C. 3086-1 of 1881, p. 144.

² For the year ending March 1902, the excess of exports over imports was 24 millions; the next year it was 29 millions and the next 40 millions.

and the very year when the import was greatest was one of terrible famine. All the offices of high emolument are held by the dominant race; the country has been denuded of working capital, and irrigation which might have saved it has received inadequate attention. The cultivator of the soil holds it at the mercy of the mortgagees, who are principally English; the tea plantations, coffee gardens and jute and indigo estates are mainly in alien hands, and the profits go out of the country; whilst the wheat and rice, which are really required for home consumption, are perforce exported to the extent of about 17 millions a year. Nearly seven times as much has been spent on railways as on irrigation works—railways chiefly useful for sending grain out of the country and not yielding an adequate return, but made with foreign capital (affording a market for English steel rails, locomotives and rolling-stock) on a guaranteed interest (in the earlier years five per cent.); so that the investment eventually rose in value in the London market by fifty per cent. or more, and when the Government bought they did so at a heavy premium created solely by their own guarantee. A huge army is maintained in the interest of the entire Empire and far beyond the requirements of India herself;¹ and

¹ If 30,000 men could be spared from India during the South African war, it seems tolerably clear that they are not permanently required for the defence of India. And yet a recent official statement runs:—"We still pursue our aim of increasing the efficiency of our military defensive forces"; and this is followed by figures showing a gradual growth of expenditure since 1900-1 from 14 to 18 millions. *Blue Book, East India (Financial Statement)* 193, p. 15.

Of course India is to be saddled with the cost of our Imperial expedition to Tibet on the ground that it was the Indian Government

altogether no less a sum than about 16 millions¹ is annually taken from India's scanty resources by the Secretary of State to provide for the cost of government, pensions and allowances, military expenditure, interest and dividends, and sundry other charges. And so perennially this drain on the resources of the country goes on as the price of British rule; and we get some indication of why it is that a large portion of the people obtain but one meal a day, that the average duration of life is only twenty-three years (as compared with forty years in Great Britain), that millions periodically die of starvation, and that whole tracts of territory have been depopulated.

This, briefly presented, is Mr Digby's indictment of our rule in India; although he fully recognises that such rule has secured freedom from internal strife, and that the civil administration has many good points in its favour. That the indictment is absolutely impregnable in every detail need not be here contended; it must be substantially disproved before we stand exonerated; and despite the hostile criticism it has evoked, nothing approaching an effective rejoinder has been forthcoming. Lord

who called the tune—that is to say, the unfortunate ryot is, as usual, to pay for the sport of his rulers.

¹(Now 18 millions.) "But this grand total does not include the remittances on account of private gains from railways, banking, merchandise, the ocean and river carrying trade, tea and coffee planting, cotton and jute mills, indigo, coal mines, and the like, or the private savings of officials and others which are sent to England. Taking these into consideration, it is a moderate computation that the annual drafts from India to Great Britain amount to a total of thirty millions." *New India*, by Sir Henry J. S. Cotton, K.C.S.I., London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1904, p. 100.

George Hamilton, whilst admitting that India is very poor, argued that the income has increased and that the famines are due to drought which no Government can prevent.¹ He, however, refused to receive a deputation from the Indian Famine Union, who desired to urge an exhaustive economic inquiry; whilst Mr Digby effectively quotes the rainfall in famine years as showing that drought is due not to the absence of water but to neglect of the facilities for storage. Sir Charles A. Elliott, formerly Lieut.-Governor of Bengal, essayed a more detailed criticism of our author;² whereupon the latter adroitly cited Sir Charles himself as formerly "not hesitating to say that half our agricultural population never know from year's end to year's end what it is to have their hunger fully satisfied."² But what was regarded as the Official Reply to the indictment appeared in the columns of the *Times*,³ and Mr Digby then wrote calling for a definition of issues,⁴ whereupon he was specifically challenged on six points.⁵ In high satisfaction that "for the first time in its history the India Office was ready and apparently anxious to meet its critics" he promptly prepared a detailed and categorical answer. The *Times*, however, could only allow space for a comparatively short letter, so the full document was put into type as a separate pamphlet, in which was reprinted the official defence; but permission to publish this was actually refused, the writer of the article objecting to its reproduction; with the

¹ *Speech in House of Commons*, February 3, 1902.

² *The Review of Reviews*, vol. xxv. pp. 256-7 (1902).

³ February 3, 1902. ⁴ February 6, 1902. ⁵ February 10, 1902.

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result that it had to be deleted, and that the pamphlet as issued contains several pages which are blank except as to an explanatory note of their original contents.¹ The attempted vindication of the official position thus ended in a fizzle. It is no doubt easy for a Government to give itself a good character;² what would be more to the point would be the testimony of the governed.

To attempt to quote, from all the numerous writers and authorities, the independent testimony which supports the general conclusions as to the impoverishment of India would be too formidable a task to attempt here;³ but brief reference may be made to the strong corroborative evidence of one later writer, stated, as an open secret, to be an Anglo-Indian ex-official who devoted twenty-eight years of his life to the task of governing the country. And some of the striking features of the tale which

¹ *British Rule in India. Apologetics and Criticisms. A Runaway Apologist.* London, A. Bonner, 1902.

² As Lord Curzon does. *Speech at the Guildhall, London, July 20, 1904.*

³ "The tendency of officials is to exalt unduly the excellence of the work on which they have been themselves engaged; and err on the side of excessive self-laudation. . . . It is not in the volumes annually published by Anglo-Indian administrators that we may look for any glimmer of insight into that utter derangement of economic and social conditions which our conquest has wrought, and which is the chief cause of the pauperisation of the people." *New India* (see footnote, p. 24), p. 163.

⁴ Amongst others may be mentioned, Mr Dadabhai Naoroji (see *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1901), Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., Mr Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E. (see *India in the Victorian Age*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1904), Mr S. S. Thorburn, Mr W. C. Bonnerjee, the late Mr W. S. Caine, M.P., Mr C. E. Schwann, M.P., and Sir Henry J. S. Cotton, K.C.S.I. (see *New India*, *supra*). By

the author of "The Failure of Lord Curzon"¹ tells are as follows :—The debt of India increased between 1875 and 1900 from 95 million pounds to 199 million pounds² and the military charge from roundly 120 millions to 230 millions of rupees. Over-taxation of the most grinding kind is eating out the life of the Indian races ; the annual burden on land over nearly all the provinces is equivalent to at least a 55 per cent. income-tax ; the agricultural classes, who are sunk in poverty, are taxed beyond all reason, and the Government is continuing and accentuating a desolating policy. The Delhi Durbar was an unpardonable waste of public and private money, and whilst it would need the pen of a Juvenal to adequately portray the degradation of English manners involved, a single fact will bring home the real meaning of the whole pagan rout, namely that one of the most prominent feudatories declared

way of illustration the following testimony of Sir W. Wedderburn may be quoted :—

The Indian native population, the greater part of whom are peasantry living on the produce of the land, have no reserve to fall back upon. If the annual harvest is a failure they must die of hunger, unless helped by the State. It is a fact little known that in all the famines that have occurred, even in the worst places, there has never been a lack of food at reasonable prices. Not only was there a sufficient quantity of grain, but there were sufficient railways to bring it within reach of all who needed it. The reason why the natives are so pitifully in want of money with which to purchase grain, is that they are in the hands of the money-lenders, hopelessly in debt, owing to the severe taxation to which they are subjected. *Speech at Walthamstow, January 19, 1904.* And see also pp. 238-245.

For the views of one who writes "frankly from the standpoint of an admirer of British rule in India" the reader may be referred to *Actual India*, by Mr Arthur Sawtell, London, Elliot Stock, 1904.

¹ London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1903.

² Now 213 millions.

it was temporarily bankrupt and unable to meet its debts on account of the famine, the expenses of the Coronation at Westminster, and the still heavier outlay at Delhi. The taxation of one of the poorest nations on earth is kept up to concert pitch in order to equip an army beyond the needs of India in a manner the richest nations of Europe would be ashamed to attempt; and the London *Standard* blundered into downright truth when, after pointing out that 13,000 British officers and men and over 9,000 natives were drawn from India for the South African war, and that 1,300 British officers and men and some 20,000 native troops had been sent to China, it remarked "*such is the scale on which India, at the shortest notice, and without dislocating her establishments, can contribute towards the military capabilities of the Empire beyond her own frontiers.*" A Government of which these are some of the manifestations can only result in the abject misery of the governed. Two-thirds of the Indian population, some 200 millions of human beings, are made up of ever-hungry cultivators and day labourers. In Madras roundly one-eighth of the entire agricultural population was sold out of house and home in little more than a decade; India is rapidly becoming a land steeped in perennial poverty, and unless some strong and early steps are taken, the English people will find itself face to face with annual famines, due chiefly to the exactions of the State, to the oppression of the poor by the "Imperialist Empire-BUILDER." The vaunted surpluses are due not to prosperity but to the enhanced value of the rupee, whilst taxation is maintained at the high rate previously

necessary to meet a depreciated currency.¹ Excise revenue* has risen from £1,755,000 in 1875 to £4,239,000 in 1901 ; and liquor made at a Government distillery was found on analysis to contain seven times more fusel oil than the worst unrectified Scotch whiskey. Some years ago the most Conservative journal in India, the one ordinarily regarded as the mouthpiece of the Government, wrote with regard to Bombay that "Stupidity, blindness, indifference, greed—inability, in a word, in all its thousand forms—settled down, like the fabled harpies, on the ryot's bread, and bore off with them all that he subsisted upon." And—to make a final quotation from this author—whilst the almost all-redeeming feature of maladministration is that it is ever battled against loyally and often successfully by brave-hearted Englishmen, whose local experience and sympathies have not been blinded and blunted by the so-called necessities of finance, they risk much ; and no official can hope for high preferment and at the same time criticise even in the most moderate manner the policy of the Supreme Government, for he becomes at once what is known as an "unsafe man."

Poor hapless India ! "Look around," says Mr Digby, "look deeply ; and steel your heart for that which you shall see and hear, for you will gaze upon

¹ The increase in the Revenue Returns is officially relied upon as showing that the country is not becoming poorer. "What is actual proof of exhaustion is regarded as though it were a token of indisputable prosperity." Mr Digby, *The Ruining of India*, p. 3, London, A. Bonner, Took's Court, 1902. The fallacy of the test is sufficiently indicated by the fact that there were revenue surpluses in years of dire famine.

a sum of human misery and will contemplate a mental and political degradation the like of which, among civilised and progressive countries, is nowhere else at this moment to be seen, and probably was at no time during recorded history anywhere to be seen."¹ To this condition—there seems, alas! no escape from the conclusion—has our eastern Empire been reduced; whilst for that unhappy country, in the time of her deepest distress, no national grant could be voted (although in previous crises we had not been lacking in aid) because we were spending nearly two millions a week in gratifying our insatiate hunger for more empire. Such is the spirit and such is the product of Imperialism. 4643

The idea that we govern well is firmly rooted, but it is a delusion. Doubtless other nations would not govern better, and most of them govern worse; but that is not the point. Government at the best is necessarily imperfect, because it is conducted by fallible beings; but the rule of one race or nation by another is inevitably bad, though different races may live happily together under the same *régime* if

¹ Mr Digby died in September 1904. From early manhood he was indefatigable in the cause of India, and many representative men (including several members of the London Indian Society) were present at his funeral. Dr Clifford delivered an address, in the course of which he said they were parting with one of God's true workers, a noble man devoted to the service of humanity; that to him the oppressed had a sort of fascination; the cause of the forlorn won his sympathy, stirred his zeal, and inspired his hope; and that pre-eminently he was the "Friend of India," the 300 millions of which land seemed to be always present to his imagination and in his heart; he had striven to alleviate their sufferings, to diminish their burdens, to develop their aspirations; and he had sown seeds which would yield a great harvest, and left a legacy of responsibility as well as a legacy of privilege.

it is their own. Only by self-government, and by the basis of that government being as broad as possible, can good government be approximately attained.

4643.

IMPERIALISM INIMICAL TO FREEDOM

The explanation of the failure of Imperialism is simple; it is due to one characteristic, manifested alike as regards the dominant and subservient race, namely the antagonism to freedom—by which, of course, is meant collective freedom.¹

Freedom lies at the root of progress, and for this reason Imperialism is inherently vicious; its indictment may be summed up in the statement that it is destructive of liberty. Only in proportion as communities govern themselves, and work out their own salvation, do they fulfil the law of their being, and advance in the scale of civilization; only in proportion as they refrain from arbitrarily ruling others, are they able to secure for themselves the blessings which freedom vouchsafes. Empire degrades the victims and demoralises the victors, because it permits of liberty to neither; in its inception and in its fruition it spells bondage. And "the danger is not that a particular class is unfit to govern," for "every class is unfit to govern"; but "the law of liberty tends to abolish the reign of race over race, of faith over faith, of class over class."²

If we wish to see how, in the making stage,

¹ See p. 49.

² *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary, daughter of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone*, London, George Allen, 1904, p. 93.

Empire stifles freedom at every step, we have but to revert to South Africa. Here we had in rapid and cumulative sequence—the introduction of so-called “martial law” (that is the negation of all law)—the suspension of parliamentary government, in breach of the constitution—the establishment of a military censorship of the press—the abrogation of the principles of justice—men arrested and detained in custody without being brought to trial, and in some cases without knowing of what they were accused—women and children ejected from their homes and marched away to privations which resulted in death—with such secondary picturesque incidents as, on the one hand, the forcible deportment of a philanthropic lady who had thrown light upon the situation, and on the other, the detention in the country of an unfortunate editor (who had suffered imprisonment) until the action had been denounced by one English statesman as “plainly illegal, unconstitutional, tyrannical, arbitrary, impudently absurd and preposterous.”¹

And then, peace having been declared, we find the military despot yields only to the civil despot, who in turn yields to the financial despot; the government largely controlled by the capitalists, and becoming subservient to raising dividends; a rigorous dynamite monopoly established, a new serfdom introduced into the mines and white labour curtly dispensed with; the people robbed of their territorial rights; the Home Government at once withholding representative institutions and refusing to curb the gold-hunting oligarchy; and the chief

¹ Mr Morley in the House of Commons, April 24, 1902.

liberty accorded to the majority being the liberty to starve.¹

Or do we wish to see how empire, in the mature stage, stifles freedom, turn we again to India. Here we have countless millions denied the rights accorded to the English agricultural labourer, taxed to pay for a Government in which they have no voice, condemned to support an army they cannot control, rack-rented for land they cultivate mainly for the benefit of others, compelled to yield interest on an expenditure they did not make, and generally reduced to the condition of hewers of wood and drawers of water, with sufferance as the badge of all their tribe. There is no need to recapitulate.

Whilst, however, the denial of freedom involved both in conquest and subsequent rule, is, so far as the conquered and subservient race is concerned, self-evident, it is not so readily perceived that Imperialism also exacts the same price at the hands of the conquering and dominant race.

Would we realise this, let us look at home. Here we have had a momentous judicial decision which to the lay mind is not easily reconciled with Magna Charta and the Petition of Right,² freedom of speech persistently denied, political opponents assaulted and public buildings wrecked, rowdyism proudly quoted as a proof of the devotion of the people to the new ideal; and, above all, the proletariat

¹ See footnote pages 206-7. Commenting on a Blue Book dealing with the affairs of the Transvaal, the *Standard* naively remarked "The picture it presents is far less cheerful than we might have expected after a considerable period of British rule." February 4, 1904.

² *Ex parte* D. F. Marais; Privy Council, Nov. 5, Dec. 18, 1901.

forging their own fetters and carrying out the behests of an imperious dictator. And it must be so by eternal law ; people who enslave others always end by themselves becoming slaves. For subjugation and arbitrary rule can only be accomplished by force ; and force can only be organised by militarism ; and the essence of militarism is subordination—subordination, not merely of the private soldier to the commander, but of the State to the Government. A fighting people can never be free, and the more they fight the further they recede from freedom ; a nation which sets itself to bring another under its yoke must itself be content to be arbitrarily ruled. Even the mere taxation which the process renders necessary operates in the same direction, for the additional demands of the State involve an increased compulsory service on the part of the citizen from which he derives no benefit.

Unless the spirit which has for the last few years been rampant in England can be checked—happily there are signs that it is to some extent abating—her liberties will disappear. Imperialism is the trump card of plutocracy and oligarchy, and the British working man has been yielding up his birthright to the demon of conquest. If the people are discontented, prate to them of glory ; if they are reduced to living in slums, tell them they have goodly heritage in a great Empire. The poor fools will awaken from their delusion ; but it will not then be easy for them to escape from their self-imposed bondage.

We sometimes hear the smug phrase, *Imperium et libertas*. As applied to the subject race, it is a cruel

mockery; as applied to the dominant race, it is an exquisite satire. With a slight verbal alteration, however, merely the change of the conjunction, it embodies a profound truth. *Imperium AUT libertas* is the choice, for no nation can have both. We may go on year after year subjugating others, we may conquer until there shall be no more lands to conquer, but the inquiry—to which a so-called Christian nation pays little heed—arises, "What shall it profit us if we gain the whole world and lose our own souls?" Our spiritual natures are being atrophied by the lust of power and the pride of empire; and we are welding our own gyves. Even the gentler sex has been contaminated; when war is waging the restraining influence of our sisters is withdrawn, and the women become as heartless as the men. In the enigmas of history there is nothing more astounding than that England, the champion of freedom and the friend of the oppressed, should destroy freedom and play the part of the oppressor, withal unconsciously undermining her own liberties.

Is it too late for us to retrace our steps? The past cannot be recalled, the evil done is irrevocable; but the future is ours to mould as we will. The doom of the ancient empires of the world has not yet been pronounced upon us; yet when we read of "decline and fall" we may well realise that we too have declined, and fallen also in certain senses; and although the culminating act of the Imperial drama has happily not been reached, Nemesis will not be dodged, and we have entered upon troublous times. But we may still return to the parting of the ways,

and regain the right road ; and there are not wanting hopeful auguries. Strong efforts have been made to recall us to the path of rectitude and honour. Powerful impeachments of "methods of barbarism" have gone forth ; there has been plain speaking in high places, and one political party in the State—a party which has for too long been partially paralysed—is regaining vigour and showing indications of its old vitality.

Ah! had we but had a Gladstone with us still, one who with clarion voice should have roused the country from Land's End to John o' Groats with a proclamation of the eternal verities, and preached again the lofty creed of government by consent, the recognition of "the equality of the weak with the strong and the principles of brotherhood amongst nations and of their sacred independence"¹—what a different tale might not the past few years have told! It is not the fault of others that they lack the fascinating personality or the unique persuasive powers, and some of them did their best. But they failed to awaken in the hearts of the people that responsive echo which his words evoked. Yet may we hope that his work still lives ; and that, if slowly and haltingly, the people whom he moved with his eloquence will recall his words, and renew their allegiance to the principles they learned from him, and in which they once rejoiced.

Corrupted we have been by pride more than greed. Whilst some have pursued the *ignis fatuus* of Imperialism with the fierce desire to accumulate wealth, it is not as a commercial asset that the bulk

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons, June 27, 1850.*

of the people have regarded the British flag—they have been deluded by the blatant appeals to their national vanity, and by the alluring sense of racial superiority. But a haughty spirit has more than once gone before a fall. Again and again were we overtaken by disaster and defeat ; for the greater part of three years a people, small in numbers, but as sturdy and liberty loving as ourselves, held us at bay ; and, although we may flatter ourselves that we have subdued them, the lesson is the same—that liberty is a jewel to be highly prized, that those who value their own freedom should respect the freedom of others, and that retribution waits upon the wrong-doer. We have destroyed, says Mr John Burns, the moral fibre of our people, we have degraded the free institutions of the land we once loved to hail *Great Britain*. And then, “What is this Imperialism?” he asks ; and answers the question in language understood of the people : “It is nothing more nor less than uniform black-guardism.”

Racial supremacy is disastrous, not merely to the subservient, but to the dominant race. Imperialism destroys all that is best and noblest in a nation, and is alike inimical to social development, to moral progress, and to general well-being. True greatness is found within rather than without. It is not given to many men to rule others wisely or well ; it is the man who rules himself that is really great. And it is not the nation which seeks to conquer or to govern others, but the nation which conquers and governs itself that attains to majesty.

II

LIBERALISM AND IMPERIALISM

A LIBERAL DÉBÂCLE

THE spectacle presented by one of the great political parties in the State during a period when issues unusually momentous called for determination, the spectacle of a house divided against itself, indicated a grave crisis in the history of the party, and one which could scarcely fail to exercise a material influence on its future career. It is true that the crisis is supposed to have passed with the termination of the event in which it originated, and that there are signs of a partial reunion ; but although a new rallying point has been found the old differences remain, and it is only by fixing the eye on an object of mutual antipathy that what would otherwise be conspicuous becomes crepuscular, and that an approach to a common focus has been temporarily attained. If wounds (not being fatal) heal in time, they nevertheless cannot be forgotten when they leave ugly scars ; and, whilst "let bygones be bygones" is a very good injunction in certain cases, it does not always admit of performance, and there are occasions when it is positively pernicious. Dissensions which are due to a mere passing incident it is wise to bury in oblivion, but it is disastrous to

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attempt to ignore them when they spring from deep-seated causes and are far-reaching in their effects. The differences which prevailed in the ranks of the Liberal party were fundamental, and, although for the time being ignored, they still prevail ; they might, under given conditions, result in the storm raging again with its old fury ; in any case they have left their mark ; in any case they point to a divergence concerning vital principles, and have therefore an indirect bearing on the destinies of the party. They related to questions of high imperial polity, and polity is of the essence of party. Mr Chamberlain has intimated, with an unimpeachable accuracy not always characteristic of his utterances, that the British Empire will remain though he should die to-morrow ; and so long as the British Empire remains problems of empire will exist ; and so long as problems of empire exist their solution is the business of politicians ; and it is, in the main, the conflict of views with regard to the nature of the solution which differentiates the various groups. Hence, the moment such a conflict arises within the same group in connection with a problem of the first magnitude, the very existence of the group is imperilled ; and to attempt to evade the danger by agreeing to differ is merely to adopt the inept process by which the ostrich blinds itself to its impending fate.

The segregation of the Liberal party was not only emphasised, but more or less perpetuated, by the formation of two organisations, with both of which the same individual could not possibly be identified. The one known as the " League of

Liberals against Aggression and Militarism" was born in the early days of the late war, was of rapid growth, and embraced many prominent men, now active members of the political committee of the New Reform Club in which the League was eventually merged. The other, of later birth, originally assumed the name of the "Imperial Liberal Council," and although in one sense short lived, yet as it "ultimately suffused itself gently into the soul" of another body,¹ the present "Liberal League," it may be said to be, by a process of metempsychosis, very much in evidence, and to command influential support. Of course both Leagues disclaimed any intention of hostility to Liberalism, and it is no doubt true that separate organisations may exist within the same ranks without being necessarily antagonistic. Nor, indeed, is there anything novel in the sectional division of a political party. The present generation has witnessed the inception of "Tory Democracy," a somewhat peculiar creed which was evolved by certain restless and ambitious spirits who, discontented with the stolidity of official Conservatism, sought to strike out a path for themselves. It has still a few adherents; but it sank into insignificance on the coalition of prominent Liberals with their normal opponents, and the formation of a new party under the title of "Unionists." The latter stands upon a different footing, and is a kind of hybrid partnership between men of reputedly incompatible general principles, formed for the purpose of defeating a particular project which they both regarded as peculiarly objectionable; but its history shows that

¹ Lord Rosebery, *Speech at Hotel Cecil, London, July 31, 1902.*

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the partnership, if not fatal to the men, is fatal to the principles. And now this hybrid body has itself been rent in twain by the individual who was largely responsible alike for its formation and for the disruption of the group with which he had hitherto been identified.

It is not, however, in the "Constitutional party," as its members sometimes style themselves, that we must usually expect to find that divergence of opinion which not infrequently occurs amongst Liberals—and this for an obvious reason. To secure unity between men who are mainly concerned with upholding existing institutions is, naturally, much less difficult than to secure it between men who are mainly concerned with reforming such institutions. A progressive party, in fact, cannot in the very nature of things be for long absolutely homogeneous. Its adherents may all agree as to the existence of evils or anomalies, but they will have their individual opinions, not only as to the methods of reform, but as to the relative importance of various items of their programme; whilst for the promotion of each of the more prominent of those items associations are usually called into being, and command the special support of different members of the party. In such circumstances sectional divisions are inevitable; and although there can, or at any rate ought to be, united action to secure the general objects of the body, absolute unity is scarcely possible. This in itself is not altogether to be deplored, for it tends to a kind of winnowing or clarifying process. But whether regarded as desirable or otherwise, it is too indubitable to render the creation of any new sectional organisa-

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tion a matter of surprise, or even of importance, *per se*.

There is, however, at least one clearly defined limit to the permissible heterogeneity between politicians claiming allegiance to the same cause, namely that it must not involve a conflict of first principles. It is from the disregard of this that we get the cleavage of the ranks on the question of Imperialism—which resulted in the Liberal *débâcle*. For such a cleavage goes to the root ; and if it does not kill, growth can only be independent. In other words, and dropping metaphor, we get two distinct parties ; and hence the disintegration indicates that on one side or the other there has been a betrayal of the common cause.

Now an incongruity of this character can only arise from the failure, either to adequately apprehend first principles, or to consistently reduce them into action. Before, therefore, we can arrive at the ultimate cause of the disruption and determine with whom the responsibility lies, we have first to ascertain what those principles are, and then to discover in what way they have been infringed. The point resolves itself into one of whether or not Imperialism is inconsistent with Liberalism ; and this cannot be settled unless we have a clear and definite conception of Liberalism. Imperialism has already been analysed.¹

THE RATIONALE OF LIBERALISM

What, then, is Liberalism ? The question is one which, in view of the number of its adherents and

¹ See pp. 4-10.

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the records of its achievements, ought to command a ready response. And yet, simple though it seems, probably there are very few Liberals who could answer it offhand in anything like a precise manner ; and the chances are they would fall back upon illustrations, or, if they attempted a generalisation, would intimate that Liberalism consisted in the promotion of reform. But a creed is not to be defined by actions ; these should be the outcome of the creed ; and the "promotion of reform" is in itself a vague and indeterminate phrase. Liberalism does not consist in a Newcastle programme, on the one hand, or in a clean slate, on the other. A programme is not only a very good, but a very necessary thing, provided we know how to draw it up ; and a clean slate may perhaps at times be useful, provided we know what to write upon it. Men, however, are not Liberals because they advocate particular measures ; on the contrary, they ought to advocate particular measures because they are Liberals ; and they are certainly not Liberals because they freely apply the sponge, although it is of course possible that Liberalism may prompt them at times to take that course. Works spring from faith ; they should give us a clue to the faith, but they do not constitute it ; they may be the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace ; but, before we can accept them as signs of grace, we must know what grace is. Liberalism indubitably induces a desire for reform ; but reform does not consist in mere change, and change indeed may mean retrogression and not progress. Every suggested change, every proposed reform, every item of a programme, every species of

propaganda, must be tested by some principle before it can be appraised ; and to those who profess to be Liberals conformity to the principles of Liberalism constitutes the test ; it is by those principles that a Liberal must judge Imperialism. Therefore to answer the question of "What is Liberalism ?" as a preliminary to the inquiry of whether or not Imperialism is in harmony with it, we have to ascertain what its fundamental principles are.

Now, although one would have thought that there could be little scope for investigation into a matter of this kind, the fact seems to be that it would puzzle the majority of Liberals to reduce their beliefs to first principles, and that if they made the attempt they would by no means agree ; indeed, it is the failure to firmly apprehend and grasp such principles that is the chief cause of the vagaries and eccentricities which not infrequently characterise the party of reform. Men see that society is imperfect, that injustice prevails, that the times are out of joint : there is much in their daily experience from which their moral nature revolts ; some of them are themselves victims or scapegoats ; and as the result, unless they are too apathetic, indifferent or cowed to take any interest in public affairs, they give in their adhesion to that political body which professes dissatisfaction with the existing condition of things, seeks to alter them, and inscribes on its banner the word "progress." But they do not get a philosophic conception of their creed ; it is not to them so much a principle as a programme ; their Liberalism merely takes the form of advocating a number of measures, all of which are probably sound and bene-

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ficial, but which they are unable to trace to that common source from which such measures, if really Liberal, ought to spring. Hence, when some new problem arises, or some new departure is proposed—as, for instance, in the case of Ireland and Home Rule—many of them are perplexed, and may eventually decide to oppose what, if they had a guiding principle by which to test the problem or proposal, they would have seen it to be their duty to support.

And these characteristics are by no means peculiar to the rank and file of the party; they have been exhibited by some of its leading members. Several years ago Mr Andrew Reid issued a small volume under the title of "Why I am a Liberal,"¹ containing the reasons given by a number of prominent men; yet, despite the source from which they emanated, the reasons were for the most part far from luminous. Some of the writers, although responding at length, seem to walk round the question; others deal with it in an illusory manner. Very few can be said to lay down a root principle or present us with a crystallization of Liberalism; and reference need only be made to those dicta which are associated with names of the first rank, or to those which seem specially apt. Of course, the definition to which great weight attaches, and which is often quoted on account of its authoritative and epigrammatic character, is that of Mr Gladstone, to the effect that Liberalism is trust in the people qualified by prudence (Conservatism being mistrust of the people qualified by fear). The qualification, however, opens a safe retreat for any weak-kneed Liberal, who, if

¹ London, Cassell & Co., Ltd.

charged with falling short of his creed, would calmly reply that he is simply actuated by prudence ; whilst the definition seems to have the further defect that it regards Liberalism from the statesman's rather than from the popular standpoint. Trust in the people is no doubt a sound principle for a Liberal Government, but when enunciated for the benefit of the people themselves it is simply an exhortation to self-trust or to trust of one another ; and however good individual or mutual confidence may be, it is not the final word of Liberalism, nor does it suffice for the solution of political problems. Lord Rosebery's answer was inconsequential : "Because I wish to be associated with the best men in the best work." Any honest politician of whatever creed (or a dishonest one, for a matter of that) would probably say the same thing ; and all that the utterance amounts to is the expression of a pious opinion on the part of its author that the best men are Liberals and the best work that which they undertake.¹ Browning contributed a poem in which he proclaimed that Liberalism consists in the promotion of liberty ; and Mr Chamberlain regarded it as the expression in politics of the law of progress. The first is no doubt practical, but scarcely sufficiently determinate by itself ; and the second, whilst suggestive, does not afford substantial guidance. Mr Broadhurst, however, came near to the mark when he stated that the object of Liberalism is to remove

¹ At a much later date Lord Rosebery—still nobly, but vaguely, striving after "the best"—gives a "rough definition" of Liberalism as a "readiness to accept and to assimilate the best ideas of the time and to apply them honestly in action." *Speech at the Queen's Hall, London, June 10, 1904.*

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all obstacles erected by man which prevent all having equal opportunities ; for, although this is not a definition, it is possible to evolve from it what perhaps is the most satisfactory definition at which we can arrive. And, again, Mr Arthur Arnold tells us that Liberalism abhors inequality before the law ; and Dr Bennett declares himself a Liberal because he would have equal rights and laws ; whilst Dr Llewelyn Bevan gathers up Liberalism in the one word "equality" ; and he further logically develops the idea with remarkable lucidity and brilliancy in some passages which may hereafter be pertinently quoted.

The definition of Liberalism which most nearly combines the three qualities of exactitude, conciseness and comprehensiveness is "the promotion of political equality" ; in the doctrine of political equality is found the fundamental principle of Liberalism, although that doctrine no doubt admits of expansion, and there are corollated or allied principles. "Equality" *simpliciter*, as given by Dr Bevan, if by that is meant absolute equality in all matters, is not possible, and probably not desirable. There are natural inequalities which it would be vain to attempt entirely to remove, and some of which give a charm to life and to man's intercourse with man. But there are also artificial inequalities, and these are generally mischievous—nature can take care of herself—and the conception of Liberalism is that it is safe, wise and beneficial to war against inequality ; that equal rights and equal opportunities should be enjoyed by all, and that

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in proportion as this ideal is approached, will the prosperity and happiness of the race be promoted. And the essence of that conception is found in the doctrine above referred to; in the principle that everyone should stand in the same position before the law, that everyone should have the same voice in the making of the law, that everyone should have the same political privilege and responsibility. Political equality therefore involves self-government, for it cannot obtain under any other form of government. And, as a corollary of this, Liberalism demands that the aim of government should be the good of the community as a whole; that the object of legislation should be to promote the welfare, not of a particular section, but of all sections; and that, as special privileges can only be conferred upon some at the expense of others, the maintenance and extension of such privileges must be firmly resisted. Hence, monopoly, of whatever form, is repugnant to the spirit of Liberalism; and herein we get in one word, the clue to every substantial item of the Liberal programme. Elaborate arguments may be framed in favour of the abolition of an hereditary chamber, the disestablishment of the Church, the taxation of ground values, the municipalisation of the liquor traffic, and many other reforms; but they are all traceable to the common denominator that monopoly is bad. It is sometimes said that Liberalism pits the masses against the classes; but whilst Liberalism is undoubtedly concerned with the masses, and whilst the evils it seeks to remove generally bear with unequal severity upon one portion of the community—by far the larger,

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and as a rule the more helpless—a more accurate statement would be that Liberalism takes no cognisance of the classes as such, for in the masses all classes are included. But it does pronounce a veto upon legislative nepotism, and can have nothing to do with “doles,” whether to landlords, clergy, brewers or the “friends” of the Government for the time being.

Associated with, if not involved in the fundamental principle, is the further principle of liberty; but herein it is worth noting that the former conception of liberty, the conception of the old Manchester school, the conception of Mr Herbert Spencer, has undergone considerable modification; and it is now seen that unrestricted liberty simply comes back to monopoly, and that individual liberty must be consistent with collective freedom or the equal liberties of all. Hence the once popular doctrine of *laissez-faire* has been frankly and freely abandoned, and the whole tendency of modern Liberal legislation (sometimes, it may be admitted, of Conservative legislation also, for reasons which need not here be investigated) has been largely socialistic in its nature. For it has become more and more recognised that political liberty is merely a means to an end, and that what is primarily requisite is economic freedom; that the liberty which permits a man to go without a dinner if he has not the means of paying for one, must yield to the freedom which permits all to labour for the requisites of healthy existence and to retain the products of their industry.¹ It is to the grave disparity in the distribution of wealth—the

¹ See pages 148-151.

result of monopoly—that to a great extent, not only political inequality, but social inequality is due ; and whilst Liberalism is not communistic in the sense of seeking to bring about an equal distribution of wealth, it *is* concerned with the removal of that inequality which is due to privilege, and with the securing to all of the same opportunities and the same rights. And with this conception of liberty—a conception to which it is not of course suggested every Liberal has attained, though it is the logical outcome of his creed—the distinction between Liberalism and Socialism becomes less pronounced or important, the difference being largely one of methods ; and not the least conspicuous achievement of Socialism is that it has to a great extent succeeded in educating and infusing its spirit into the Liberal party. Old age pensions, a graduated income tax, municipal control of gas, water, and tramways—not to mention again items of the Liberal programme already referred to—are all reforms of a distinctively collectivist character ; and if the Socialist is the sworn foe of monopoly, the consistent Liberal can scarcely regard it with less antagonism.

And now, we have only to apply to our intercourse with other countries this fundamental principle of political equality, with its allied principle of liberty, and we have the key to Liberal foreign policy. If we recognise the equal rights of individuals, we must recognise the equal rights of nations. If we abjure any distinction between the various units of the body-politic, we must abjure any distinction between the various units of the cosmos-politic. If we believe in self-government for our-

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selves, we must believe in self-government for others. If we claim the right to make our own laws, we must concede to foreign countries the right to make their own laws. If class supremacy or despotic rule is repugnant to us, national supremacy or despotic rule should be equally repugnant. If we object to privilege and monopoly within the community, we must object to privilege and monopoly by the community. In proportion as we claim the right to regulate our own conduct, to control our own affairs and work out our own salvation, must we accord to other races the same right, unless they should freely and voluntarily cast in their lot with us. If we would not ourselves permit coercion by alien States, we are debarred from employing coercion towards alien States; if we would suffer no dictation as to the management of our national concerns, we are forbidden to employ dictation as to the management of ultra-national concerns. Nor is the principle of political equality less applicable to international concerns; but here we are confronted with the fact that any one State may fail to observe it, and whilst intervention to compel its observance within that State would itself be a breach of the principle, intervention may be permissible when the breach affects other States. And that circumstances may arise in which intervention is justified, not to compel the observance of the principle within another State, but to prevent such a gross breach of it as outrages humanity, is only an exception which proves the rule. There are cases in which races of a lower type of civilisation, or even races which claim to be in the van of civilisation, are guilty of such tyranny,

oppression and revolting cruelty, that it becomes the sacred duty of other Powers to see that these things shall not continue. But the limits of the intervention are, according to Liberal principles, clearly defined. The tyranny must be indisputable; it must not be of a petty character (since, though even then it is indefensible, the remedy is worse than the disease); and the intervention must be solely with the object of preventing the continuance of such tyranny, must cease when the object is accomplished, and above all must be free from even the suspicion of racial animosity and still more of self-interest. Indeed, by this last factor alone would it be almost safe to determine whether or not a legitimate case for interference has arisen; for nations will always be slow to take upon themselves the onus of attacking another Power from purely altruistic motives. As a rule they are actuated by selfishness, vindictiveness, jealousy or hatred; and with all the wanton cruelty to which the racial or tribal instincts have led, it would be difficult to find an instance in which there has been a forcible attempt to arrest such cruelty, due to purely philanthropic or humanitarian zeal. So that we come back to the general rule that Liberals must concede to other nations the rights they claim for themselves, that the doctrine of political equality, if valid at all, is one not simply of national but of world-wide application. This is the only foreign policy consistent with Liberalism. We can sympathise with suffering abroad not less than at home; we may help to alleviate it by personal sacrifice; we are free to frankly criticise the policy of other States; we are

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not debarred from tendering judicious "friendly counsel" or from expressing moral condemnation; we may be justified in seeking to suppress brutality or aggression; but if we exceed these limits; if we indulge in vulgar abuse, slanderous innuendoes or scurrilous attacks; if we cast covetous eyes on territory, or embark in schemes of national aggrandisement; if we have recourse to coercion of any character either from selfish motives, or with objects other than such as have been referred to, we are acting contrary to the spirit of Liberalism. The golden rule might, after all, be usefully imported into the domain of politics; and we shall perhaps not altogether fail to catch its meaning if we are only true to the doctrine of political equality.

If, then, the inquiry is repeated "Why am I a Liberal?" the answer must be; not because I trust the people, for that is inconclusive; not because I am desirous of being associated with the best men in the best work, for that is inconsequential; not because I am identified with the cause of progress, for that is indeterminate; not because I advocate reform, for that is indefinite; but, because I believe in the principle of political equality and in all that such principle involves; because I am prepared to accept that principle as a guide to conduct and make it the test of political consistency; because I endeavour to promote such measures as spring from that principle, irrespective of whether they are calculated to confer personal benefit or to result in personal loss; and because I do not illogically and selfishly limit the application of that principle to my

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own country, or seek to promote her interests at the expense of other communities.

Says Dr Bevan in some remarkably fine expository passages :—

“By Liberalism I understand those principles and that practice which aim, first, at rendering the individual a self-governing person; second, combining men for the common purposes of social life, in such communities as can practically act together, under the necessary limitations of space and time; third, recognising the unity and the solidarity of the entire race.”

“The separations which are marked by any limitations of freedom, such as are involved in tributary nations, national interests, protective tariffs, disabilities arising from foreign birth, and the like, are all alien to the true conception of Liberalism. For I know no nation but the race, and no patriotism but universal humanity.”

“The supreme sanctions, therefore, of Liberalism, as I conceive them, are the interests and welfare of all men, without distinction of race, language, or colour.”¹

LIBERALISM *VERSUS* IMPERIALISM

And now, if we have obtained a correct apprehension of what Liberalism is, we see at a glance that it comes into sharp conflict with Imperialism. The essence of the latter is predominance,² that is to say political inequality. It does not recognise equal rights or equal opportunities; it is the antithesis of self-government, being arbitrary rule; its inevitable tendency is to promote the interests not of the governed but of the governing, as can be seen wherever it is in operation. It means the creation, maintenance and extension of privilege and mon-

¹ *Why I am a Liberal* (footnote, p. 45), 28-30.

² See p. 5.

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opoly, and of all the evils flowing therefrom. It is the negation of liberty, the denial to others of the freedom claimed for oneself, the *argumentum baculinum*, the apotheosis of despotism. Thus at every point it is anti-Liberal. Racial supremacy is not less opposed to equality than class supremacy; national predominance is not less coercive than sectional predominance; absolute government does not cease to be the denial of self-government because it is applied to an alien race. In short, Liberalism and Imperialism are wide as the poles asunder.

It is no doubt true that the Imperialist professes to seek the welfare of the governed, and often honestly believes he is promoting it; that is to say, he has such an exalted idea of his own capacity for rule as to think he is conferring a boon by enforcing it, and is so puffed up with national pride and patriotic conceit as to beam with complacent benevolence when he witnesses the expansion of his country's sway. That he is labouring under a colossal delusion, that the welfare of the governed is not actually promoted, that Imperialism cannot, in fact, produce good government, has already been pointed out,¹ and in any case need not be here demonstrated, since for present purposes such a demonstration would be irrelevant. For if the Liberal who puts forward this contention could establish its validity, he would simply be destroying the very foundation of his creed, because he would then be establishing that the doctrine of political equality is unsound, and that the prosperity and happiness of the race is traceable to political inequality. What he is really advocat-

¹ See pp. 30-31.

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ing is a "benevolent despotism"¹ or a paternal form of government, and the answer to him is that, if he believes in this, he ought to strip himself of his Liberal attire, for he is merely masquerading in Tory garments. A Conservative Imperialist is at any rate consistent; Imperialism is the natural deduction from his creed, for to him the doctrine of political equality is obnoxious. He has fought against it in the past; he fights against it to-day. He does not think that all men should have the same rights and opportunities; he does not regard the masses as capable of self-government; he holds it is for the good of the country that power should not be apportioned according to numbers, and that what he terms the "educated" and "propertied" classes should have a larger if not a preponderating voice in the government; and just as he has been, and is, opposed to the removal of political disabilities, to adult suffrage, to the abolition of plural voting, and to the abrogation of what he considers as the safeguard of an hereditary Chamber, and just as he views with satisfaction the existence of monopoly and the maintenance of privilege, so he logically approves of coercive rule in Ireland, has no twinge of conscience as to the dominion exercised over India, and glorifies empire and exults in its expansion. In so doing, he is but uniformly judging by his own perspective, the result of a narrow vision; but when a professing Liberal prostrates himself before the Imperial fetich, he rebels against the light.

¹ The theory of benevolent despotism is fully discussed later. See *The Ethics of Empire*, page 214.

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Here, however, the Liberal Imperialist may say that his ultimate aim is the creation of autonomous States—that Imperialism is merely a means to an end, and when a race has been brought under our sway, free institutions will in due course be accorded to it, the object being that self-government shall be granted the moment the capacity has been developed. As to this it may, in the first place, be remarked that if the real motive of subduing others is to leave them free to govern themselves, then (even ignoring the Jesuitical nature of the process) we arrive at the position that the culminating purpose of Imperialism is to destroy itself. That being so, the question arises whether it would not be better at once to give it the happy dispatch. If we are so anxious to promote autonomy, why not recognise it where it already exists, instead of abrogating it with a view to its restoration? And if our mission is one of pure philanthropy, why not limit ourselves to philanthropic means, instead of forcing our boons upon reluctant peoples at the point of the sword? The method is not calculated to commend itself to them, and one can fancy them saying :—

“ Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But—why did you kick us downstairs ? ”

The short effective answer to the plea, however, is that it is not true in fact. Imperialism seeks, not to destroy but to perpetuate itself—it does not aim at the creation of autonomous States, but maintains arbitrary rule : it does not seek to develop the capacity for self-government, but checks or stifles it ; and it is only when the capacity exists and is

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able to assert itself—in other words, only when Imperialism can be check-mated—that self-government is obtained. Let us read the history of the acquisition of British India, with all its revolting details ; let us read the history of British rule in India, with its long record of the exploitation of a famine stricken people ; let us ask what substantial measure of self-government has ever been conferred upon India, and what progress has been made towards that postulated goal of autonomy, if we wish to realise the hollowness of this casuistical defence of empire.

Of course the truth is that all the talk about the ultimate good of conquered races proceeds from pure self-deception, whereby we conceal the fact that we are merely pursuing our own interests, or gratifying our own passions, or asserting our own supremacy. There is only one logical basis for Imperialism, and that is found in the doctrine of the superior person, the doctrine of divine right, the doctrine of the chosen nation ; in short, the doctrine, by whatsoever name known, of which the foundation is inequality.

Imperialism and Liberalism, then, let it be repeated, are as wide as the poles asunder ; from which it follows that the nearer we approach the one the further we recede from the other. A Liberal can only render allegiance to Imperialism at the expense of his Liberalism ; the Liberal party can only adopt an Imperialist policy by stultifying itself. The conclusion is one from which there is no escape, but fortunately (or unfortunately) it is one which

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can be readily verified by actual experience. For what has been the effect of Imperialism upon one brilliant individual who formerly led the Liberal party? And what has been the effect of Imperialism upon the Liberal party itself? Both questions are worthy of a detailed answer.

A LIBERAL DEGENERATE

In the career of Lord Rosebery we can trace, almost stage by stage, the gradual undermining of Liberalism by Imperialism. Despite the fact that by the accident of birth he was doomed to breathe the Conservative atmosphere of the hereditary Legislative Chamber, despite the fact that the possession of considerable wealth was calculated to imbue him with the tenets of plutocracy, he demonstrated that the Liberal creed is robust enough to overcome these adverse influences, at any rate in the case of a man of keen intellect, broad sympathy, and absolute integrity. He threw in his lot with the progressive party, placed his great talents at their disposal, became the loving disciple and sworn ally of Mr Gladstone, rapidly came to the front, and at a comparatively early age attained to the exalted position of Prime Minister. But whilst freeing himself from class bias, he almost from the first exhibited an inability to shake off national bias; and he became identified with what is known as a "strong foreign policy," a policy to which, so far as it merely indicates a determination to legitimately maintain national rights, of course no objection can be taken, but one which is generally interpreted

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with considerable latitude. At the height of his career he resigned the leadership of the party ; and from that day forth he has conspicuously manifested an increasing sympathy with Imperialism and a diminishing sympathy with Liberalism, until at length, despite his drastic criticism of the Government—a criticism which their genius for blundering, their despicable shuffling, their bureaucratic arrogance, their disreputable legislation, and their remarkable inefficiency irresistibly provokes—it would be difficult to discover what fundamental political principle divides him from the “Unionist” party ; or rather, did divide him, until that party was itself split up into two hostile sections. His appearance in public was for some time fitful and meteoric, but the notable fact is that year after year whenever it took place it was made, not for the purpose of encouraging his political allies or with the result of advancing the Liberal cause, but for the purpose of criticising their policy, and with the result of retarding the cause. The one and only rôle he played to perfection was that of the candid friend, to the delight of the common enemy and the strengthening of their defiant citadel. Criticism from within is no doubt at times very necessary, and may, if judicious, prove salutary ; but a man of weight and talent who, whilst holding himself aloof from active work, comes forward at recurring intervals and grave junctures to inflict damaging blows upon those with whom he is nominally identified, can do more mischief than an actual traitor.

Five years ago Mr Massingham pointed out in

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the *Nineteenth Century*¹ that this "most irresponsible of men" had made himself impossible, and that the evidence of his decision to break with the Liberal party was decisive. He had then made four incursions into politics, each in absolute antagonism to the Gladstonian tenets, namely to crush out the Armenian agitation, to intensify the Fashoda incident, to foreshadow his subsequent repudiation of Home Rule, and to renounce the post-Majuba policy. The Liberal party, true to its principle of sympathy with oppressed nationalities, had definitely ranged itself on the side of the victims of the "Great Assassin," but Lord Rosebery, from a holy horror of the possibility of war—a horror which might have been credited to him for righteousness if it had been exhibited at a somewhat later period—signalled his resignation of the leadership by separating himself from the policy of his former chief, and whilst not "unwilling to draw the sword in a just and necessary cause," apparently did not regard the arrest of the crusade of slaughter in Armenia as within that description, which, indeed, was limited to the defence of "interests directly and distinctively British."² In the case of Fashoda, the late leader emerged from his retreat and rallied to the support of the Conservative Government³ in order, as Mr Massingham put it, to "add the coping stone or ornamental finial to that North African Empire which Mr Gladstone dreaded and disliked," and thus increased the difficulties of French statesmen

¹ November, 1899, p. 729.

² *Speech at Edinburgh*, October 9, 1896.

³ *Speech at Epsom*, October 12, 1898.

in making a graceful retreat and averting hostilities, and assisted in provoking an intensely bitter feeling towards us on the part of our near neighbour. At the City Liberal Club we had the famous "before 1886" speech,¹ which although characteristically enigmatical, save in its outspoken Imperialism, was in the light of further development evidently intended to indicate dissociation from the great measure for giving self-government to the sister isle, which is the sacred legacy bequeathed to the Liberal party by its revered and lamented chieftain. Finally our imperialistic zealot, in a speech in support of the South African War² pronounced a solemn adverse judgment upon the just, wise and magnanimous act—an act which for all time will stand out as one conspicuous instance of that righteousness which exalteth a nation—whereby the Boers were restored to their territory and independence of which they had been wrongfully deprived.

Thus far had Lord Rosebery by the end of 1899 abandoned the Gladstonian traditions, turned his back on the Liberal party, and proved faithless to the doctrine of political equality. The next stage in the downward course was one of special significance, for it brought to view the finger-post which bears the laconic but deadly suggestive legend "To Conscription"; and whilst the Liberal warning reads "that way madness lies," it was not obscurely hinted³ that the Imperial admonition runs "that way safety

¹ May 5, 1899.

² At Bath, October 27, 1899.

³ *Speech in the House of Lords*, February 15, 1900.

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lies." The election manifesto of September 1900¹ was one of the weakest and crudest productions that ever emanated from a statesman of eminence, its contribution to practical Liberalism consisting in a colourless reference to "legislation in respect of temperance and the housing of the working classes," and its Imperialism being sufficiently manifest in references to the problem of South Africa and the priceless heritage of Empire in terms which no Conservative would have hesitated to adopt; whilst War Office administrative reform naturally shared the honours of the jejune political programme. Two months later we had the inaugural address as Lord Rector of the Glasgow University²—a most brilliant and impassioned discourse from the literary and oratorical standpoint, but the whole burden of which is the greatness and glory of empire; and in the course of this we get the now famous and apt definition of empire as "predominance of race," coupled with the inquiry of "how is that predominance to be secured?"

A considerable interval then elapsed, during which the sulking Achilles seems only to have emerged from his tent to plough a lonely furrow, a prey to that gloomy pessimism such process is calculated to engender; which resulted in his next public appearance in July 1901 being signalised by a speech "morbid to the point of hysteria," but relieved by such flowers of rhetoric as "a great hullabaloo," "Jack the Ripper," and "Oh, my heavens!" and graced by such amenities as a reference to "a meet-

¹ *Letter to Captain the Hon. H. Lambton, September 22, 1900.*

² November 16, 1900.

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ing of lunatics" and "an organised hypocrisy"; leading up to the announcement that the Liberal party was paralysed by a neutrality on Imperial questions, and that its salvation lay in purging itself from all anti-national elements.¹ And then towards the close of the year came the sensational Chesterfield speech;² a speech to which, for some occult reason, large numbers of Liberals looked forward as they would to the deliverance of an oracle—the oracle, however, proving to be of the usual Delphic order, enabling his hearers to interpret his utterance according to their several predilections—a speech of which the supposed contribution to Liberalism consisted in advising the party, first to wipe its slate clean, and secondly not to dissociate itself from the new sentiment of empire that occupied the nation; concerning which it is to be observed that the one is no doubt the necessary preliminary to the other, seeing that Imperialism will be satisfied with little less than the entire slate, and that programmes of domestic reform must therefore be sponged out. This was followed in two months by the Liverpool pronouncement,³ the chief feature of which was to make it definitely clear—if there had previously been any doubt on the point—that in cleaning the slate Home Rule necessarily disappeared; a fact which, despite the speaker's contention to the contrary, seemed effectually to destroy the last barrier which separated the so-called Liberal Imperialists from the so-called Liberal Unionists,

¹ *Speech at City Liberal Club, July 19, 1901.*

² *December 16, 1901.*

³ *February 14, 1902.*

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and which afforded the latter the legitimate opportunity of gleefully remarking that it had taken Lord Rosebery sixteen years to come to a conclusion at which they had arrived in sixteen days. The *finale* was reached in less than a week—to some it seemed that it ought to have been reached much earlier—when the quondam Liberal leader, in a letter appropriately written to a Tory newspaper,¹ definitely separated himself from the party with which he had hitherto been identified, and placed himself outside the official tabernacle; the reasons given, though embracing nothing that was then new, being sufficiently comprehensive to avoid any possibility of misconception.

Here, then, the curtain fell, for the time being at any rate, upon Lord Rosebery's career as a Liberal—although, of course, those who, whilst identifying themselves with the party of progress, share his views as to racial predominance, do not recognise the fact or they would be conscious of the incongruity of their own position. His Liberalism succumbed at last to a process of slow poisoning, arising from inoculation with the virus of Imperialism. Until he himself pronounced his own excommunication, it was possible to hope for the best, and strenuous efforts were made to retain him; efforts, however, which only resulted in loss of dignity and stamina. His political epitaph might fittingly be, "He left his party for his party's good." Months previously Mr Sidney Webb had congratulated him on his "escape from Houndsditch,"² which salubrious

¹ *The Times*, February 21, 1902.

² *Nineteenth Century—and After*, September 1901, p. 366.

66 Racial Supremacy

locality was felicitously regarded as the emporium for Gladstonian old clothes; and, although an old clothes' emporium can with equal felicity be contemplated as a Conservative depôt, the metaphor would then only require to be presented as the "flight to Houndsditch" to convey a similarly appropriate and graphic summary of the facts.

What may be the future of this talented but unstable politician, it would require a bold man to predict; but this much seems certain that, so long as he is a slave to Imperialism, Liberalism will to him be little more than a name to conjure with; and unless he should discover a loftier source of inspiration than the doctrine of racial predominance, it will be a sorry day for the Liberal party and the cause of progress should he again be entrusted by them with the reins of authority. It is true that, holding aloof from the Unionists (who are probably not anxious to find recruits amongst men who do more damage from within than from without), he has, in his favourite character of a Free Lance, vigorously attacked the revolution of our education system—somewhat tardily, and after some previous wobbling—but Liberals who still foolishly centre their hopes on the wanderer may derive what comfort they can from his belated opposition to a measure against which even Birmingham Unionism revolted. It is also true that—having previously intimated he was not a person who believed Free Trade to be part of the Sermon on the Mount, and would not hastily reject any plan offered on high authority for really cementing the Empire, nor as a

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very old and convinced Imperialist condemn such a plan till he saw it practically before him¹—he shortly found, though “with pain and with grief,” that he was unable to support Mr Chamberlain’s scheme, so far as he knew it;² and eventually, with his customary power and eloquence, preached Free Trade as an economic Gospel,³ though with a half apologetic exordium;⁴ and a little later unequivocally threw over Mr Chamberlain, with “his mad and dangerous experiment,” and at the same time, having conjured up a personal grievance anent an “attempt at proscription” (!) graciously issued the injunction to “let bygones be bygones,” flung back “the message of peace,” and with exemplary courage, announced that Liberals would be worse than fools if they were not united shoulder to shoulder against the forces of reaction.⁵ An energetic defence of Free Trade, however, even had it not been tardy and originally apologetic, can afford *per se* no distinctive evidence of Liberalism, especially when accompanied by an intimation that the “subject is not a matter of party politics”⁶ and that it should

¹ *Speech at Burnley*, May 19, 1903.

² *Speech at Hotel Cecil*, June 12, 1903.

³ *Speech at Sheffield*, October 13, 1903.

⁴ The caustic comment of the *Standard* was, “We can never be sure that we know exactly what he means, or that he will adhere to what, at any given moment, seem to be his convictions.” October 14, 1903.

⁵ *Speech at Leicester*, November 7, 1903. More recently, however, Lord Rosebery intimated he agreed with Mr Chamberlain that if there had been an offer by the Colonies it would have been criminal on the part of our statesmen to neglect the consideration of that offer; although he added he did not think the result would have been a good one. *Speech at Lincoln*, September 20, 1904.

⁶ *Speech at Burnley*, May 19, 1903.

have been non-political;¹ and when, in fact, many eminent Conservatives have been not less outspoken in its support. For reformers can never be satisfied with resisting retrogression,² but must be constantly pressing forward; and whilst Mr Chamberlain's "raging tearing propaganda" is, after all, part of the price exacted from us for having pursued that Imperial policy of which the former leader of the Liberal party is so ardent an exponent, he does not so far appear to have taken any keen interest in the more prominent Liberal remedies for the economic evils which undoubtedly exist, and which afford Protectionists an excuse for parading their nostrums.

Indeed, Lord Rosebery's utterances are invariably pitched, not in a Liberal, but in an Imperial key³—as we have already seen, but as may be still further exemplified in bringing the record up to a more recent date. When the first heavy blow was administered by the electorate to a reactionary Government for taxing the children's bread and offering them priestly pabulum,⁴ he regarded the event in the light of a warning to the Liberal party for allowing itself to be dissociated from the Imperialist aspirations of the nation⁵ (the phrase has a familiar ring). In his next notable deliverance, whilst disclaiming any intention of reverting to the

¹ *Speech at Sheffield*, October 13, 1903.

² Lord Rosebery, of course, found no difficulty in denouncing the monstrous Brewers' Endowment Bill.

³ "There is a laudable attraction about the label 'Imperial'—people dislike to be dissociated from anything so ticketed, and they are right." Lord Rosebery's *Preface* to "Canada and the Empire," by E. S. Montagu and B. Herbert. London, P. S. King & Son, 1904.

⁴ North Leeds Election, July 29, 1902.

⁵ *Speech at Hotel Cecil*, July 30, 1902.

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well-worn theme, he could not resist the opportunity to offer a "word in season" in the nature of an admonition concerning a "sense of Imperial responsibility"; explaining in the same speech that he renounced the Presidentship of the Scottish Liberal Association, because he "wanted to carry out to the very end the process of separation from party politics" which he had begun in 1896.¹ About two months later we find him engaged in the congenial task of invoking the good wishes of every patriot on Mr Chamberlain's "Imperial mission" to South Africa, and again not vaguely hinting at his own detachment by stating that there were a vast number of people not violently in love with either party, who would gladly in the present stress of affairs support a wise and strong Government to whatsoever party it might belong.² Shortly afterwards—apparently alarmed, somewhat late in the day, at the cost of the militarism he had supported—he urged we should seriously consider whether we could not work the Empire, not less efficiently, but a little more peacefully and economically, and intimated the Government seemed to have the hallucination that the word "Empire" meant expenditure (the "hallucination" has a tolerable substratum of fact) and meant little else.³ A month later his alarm had considerably increased, and he informed the House of Lords that the country was "bleeding to death,"⁴ thereby provoking the unkind ministerial reply that "during the South

¹ *Speech at Edinburgh*, November 1, 1902.

² *Speech at Plymouth*, January 16, 1903.

³ *Speech at Glasgow*, February 26, 1903.

⁴ *Speech in House of Lords*, March 24, 1903.

African war the noble Earl did not talk to them of economy,"¹ and that his speech was a dramatic contrast to the mental attitude he adopted about two years ago.² We next find him presiding over a dinner at the City Liberal Club when "complimentary flies" were thrown out, inducing the observation that he was a very old fish; and that, whilst he had been invited in terms of almost tender eloquence to assume the position of leader of the Liberal party, he could only say that he had been leader of the Liberal party and had a very vivid recollection of his experience.³ Then we have a few oratorical gems, of which even Mr Chamberlain might be proud; as for example—"we have been anxious to prove to the world that our Empire meant peace"! ⁴—though "for the last twenty-five years we have had Empire in the air we breathe, we have walked warily and cautiously with regard to it" ⁵—and "the British Empire . . . is a great defensive league of communities under the august headship of the British Crown . . . and there is only one way in which that league and those communities can flourish, it is by each of the principal units which compose it developing their own countries under their own conditions in their own ways" ⁶—which conception of empire merely suffers from the trifling defect of being exactly antithetical to the truth, and of not altogether squaring with the orator's earlier

¹ Earl Selborne, March 24, 1903.

² Duke of Devonshire, March 27, 1903.

³ *Speech*, June 11, 1903.

⁴ *Speech in House of Lords*, July 2, 1903.

⁵ *Speech at Leicester*, November 7, 1903.

⁶ *Speech at Edinburgh*, December 12, 1903.

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conception of "predominance of race," though it might be descriptive of the "British Empire" if we could wipe out the subservient seventeen-twentieths of its population.¹ And finally we find that the so-called Liberal League—that League which, so far as it has any distinctive principles, is essentially anti-Liberal—is not to be dissolved until its President sees a sure guarantee for the reduction of those principles into practice by a Liberal Government;² an intimation which leads one to hope that the League may permanently drag on its renegade career.

Now in none of these speeches do we get any indication of a grip of the fundamental principles of Liberalism, or even an attempt to formulate a moderately respectable Liberal programme. We have the indisputable doctrine of "efficiency"—"the first watchword," as it is termed³—preached with wearying reiteration; and it is true we have in another pronouncement a slight improvement on the "clean slate," in the shape of a few safe generalizations about education, temperance and housing;⁴ but we look in vain for any appreciation of the fact that the main problems it is the business of the Liberal party to solve centre upon land and labour; and we actually get an injunction to "cut down

¹ Later on Lord Rosebery again strikes the same false note when he speaks of the Empire as "A band of self-governing communities spread all over the world, united without constraint by sentiment, policy and tradition." *Speech at Trowbridge*, October 31, 1904.

² *Speech at the Hotel Cecil*, February 29, 1904. A little later the versatile politician assumed the character of an apostle of Liberal unity, and likened his mission to that of the Salvation Army, namely, to engage in "rescue work." *Speech at the City Liberal Club*, June 30, 1904.

³ *Speech at the Queen's Hall, London*, June 10, 1904.

⁴ *Speech at Sheffield*, October 14, 1903.

much of your municipal expenditure" ¹—that comparatively modest expenditure which, whilst Imperialism has been squandering its millions a year, has done so much towards transforming this London of ours, and has brought some little gladness and sunshine into the lives of its humble toilers.

In fact, Lord Rosebery's Liberalism has been riding the tiger of Imperialism; and, as we know from the sad fate of the lady immortalised in nursery rhyme, such a performance, though satisfactory to the tiger, is bad for the rider. Empire—that is to say, the supremacy of the British race—is to his Lordship what King Charles the First's head was to Mr Dick; it is perpetually bobbing up, and almost invariably in the wrong place. Even on such an apparently non-polemical topic as Commercial Education, he could not descant without conveying the impression that he was apprehensive of the cosmopolitanism of science and had a patriotic fear lest some other nation should chance to know as much as we do.² No doubt he is unfortunately right in assuming that the Liberal party stands in need of a warning, but the warning is of a very different character from that which he would give them; and no better one can be found than in his own melancholy decadence and the failure of the promise of his earlier years.

THE LIBERAL APOSTASY

Lord Rosebery, however, although a personage of great eminence and marked individuality, and therefore worthy of careful study, is, after all, only one

¹ *Speech at the Surrey Theatre, November 25, 1903.*

² *Speech at the Mansion House, March 21, 1901.*

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man ; and had the Liberal party itself remained true to its traditions, whilst it might have still deplored the loss of its accomplished, if erratic, former leader, it would not have presented the sorry spectacle it has done during the past few years. But the mal-
evolent influence of Imperialism has not been confined to prominent politicians ; it more or less permeated the ranks of the party, corrupting and demoralising it, with the result that it was for the time being rendered impotent.

By every principle of Liberalism Mr Chamberlain's South African diplomacy stood condemned ; to every principle of Liberalism the annexation of the South African Republics was abhorrent. The diplomacy was an attempt to dictate to another nation what its franchise, its fiscal policy, and its internal government should be ; its annexation was an act of despotism resulting in the destruction of its autonomous institutions. Had the alleged grievances of the Outlanders been as genuine as they were spurious,¹ they were political grievances, grievances of the category which exist in every State—Liberals are wont to tabulate a grim catalogue of those to be found in their own country. As a matter of fact, the Government of both Republics was, in many respects, far more democratic, far more in accord with Liberal principles, than that to which we have yet attained in England,² but had the reverse been the case it would have constituted no

¹ See page 179.

² Probably few dispute this as to the Orange Free State. As to the South African Republic, see *The Truth about the Transvaal*. By Edward B. Rose. London, 8 John Street, Adelphi, 1902. Chap. ii. And see footnote p. 206.

valid ground for non-friendly intervention or for recourse to threats ; and we were, moreover, by Convention bound not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. And had the war been brought about by the deliberate design of the Boers, instead of by the provocation of the British and the refusal to listen to the appeals for arbitration, there could not, upon Liberal principles, have been the vestige of a justification for its continuance after the enemy had been once driven back to their own territory and when peace could have been made upon almost any terms short of annexation and the destruction of independence. In brief, the policy was Imperialist, its object being the establishment of British supremacy ; the war was Imperialist, its object being the enlargement of empire ; and from every Liberal such a policy and such a war should have commanded uncompromising opposition. That it did not meet with widespread opposition is due to the fact that the Liberal party was itself submerged by the wave of Imperialism which swept over the country. Had it but clung tenaciously to its principles, had there been a united Liberal party exhibiting to a man its determination to resist the aggressive policy of the Government, such a policy could not have been pursued ; for even the audacity of a Chamberlain Ministry would have been inadequate to the fostering and maintenance of war in the teeth of a hostile phalanx composed of half the British nation. Indeed, this is clear from Lord Lansdowne's express intimation that the Government earnestly desired to have the country with them and believed the country was not ready for war in June

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1899.¹ 'If, therefore, the Liberals had only been true to their principles there would have been no war. The Conservatives, of course, were only acting in accordance with their creed; they are frankly and logically Imperialist; but the Liberals betrayed their trust, and were false to the principles by which they should have been guided, because, not having a firm grasp of those principles, they were ensnared by patriotism and condoned in their own nation what they would have been the first to condemn in another. The freedom their fathers won for them they denied to others; the independence of which they themselves are so proud they joined in uprooting from a foreign soil; for the right of self-government which is the outcome of their creed they concurred in substituting an alien yoke. They have, therefore, their part and lot in the shame and humiliation which came upon their country; and when Great Britain stands arraigned at the bar of history for the capital crime of an unrighteous war, it may be that they shall not be held the least culpable.

Not (obviously) that the entire Liberal party is thus impeached, for, as we have seen, there was division in the ranks; and, although the war section predominated, there was a substantial minority true to the principle of political equality. Some of the prominent men were from the first resolute in their opposition to the war (there was even a "wicked six" who refused to vote supplies) and continuously sought to recall or arouse the general body to a true conception of their duty; and throughout the country there were many others who, if less

¹ *Speech in the House of Lords*, March 15, 1901; see pp. 185-6.

prominent, laboured zealously for the same cause. But what was the reception they met? Frequently they failed to command a hearing; almost invariably they were received with the greatest intolerance; at the best they were told that they were dividing the party, and if they did not agree they could at least be silent. One all-absorbing and momentous political question occupied public attention, and one only; a question which, from its very magnitude, could not but affect the entire course of history; and upon that question those Liberals who declined to accept the immoral doctrine of "my country right or wrong" were to be dumb, whilst the remainder sounded the praises of an arrogant Tory Government, or contented themselves with carping criticism of secondary or incidental issues—"willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike." To such a depth of ignominy did Imperialism reduce the great historic Liberal party that it was positively forbidden to make a stand for its principles and, failing an open desertion to the enemy, was ordered to maintain a strict neutrality; whilst every article of the faith it was supposed to hold dear, and for which it had nobly fought in the past, was being ruthlessly trodden under foot.

Of course there was retribution, and retribution there will be for many a long year. In assisting in the coercion of others, the Liberal party was itself subject to coercion of the most abject character. By the Tories it was treated with open disdain, and regarded as a negligible quantity, an emasculated force no longer to be reckoned with. The Govern-

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ment taunted the Opposition with its weakness, caustically dwelt upon its inconsistency, mercilessly challenged it to take some decisive action, treated it with scornful derision, and boasted that the policy which was being pursued had the support of the entire nation with the exception of a few pro-Boer fanatics. For the time being those who were once the proud representatives of progressive thought and action were, for all practical purposes, snuffed out of existence. Strong in the impotence of its opponents, the most inherently weak Administration known to modern times went to the country with a mendacious shibboleth, captured an inflamed electorate, and received a new lease of life. The Liberal party, having hauled down its time-honoured flag of "Liberty, equality, fraternity," and muttering almost apologetically its old battle cry of "Peace, retrenchment and reform," fought for the most part in a half-hearted way—where it fought at all—although in one or two places stalwarts like John Burns brandished the Excalibur of political equality. The tournament (for it can scarcely be dignified with a more serious name) was one of tweedledum and tweedledee; the only question upon which the judgment of the constituencies was invited was that of the war, and as the so-called Opposition had in this matter supported the Government, voted supplies for its military operations, and was equally pledged to annexation, the policy of the two parties was substantially the same; but, on the whole, it was only natural that the majority of the electors should prefer the one to whom belonged the "honour" of initiating the policy, rather than the one who whilst

indulging in criticism of methods did not venture to express disapproval of the objects. The result in the circumstances is not altogether to be regretted. It was just as well that the lesson for the Liberal party should be complete, and they are beginning now to realise what Imperialism means, and to form some idea of the price to be paid for a "patriotic" Government. Even the long dormant nonconformist conscience, which comfortably slumbered whilst the Hague Convention was being torn to shreds, and whilst freedom was being slowly done to death, has, now that its own liberty has been assailed, awakened with a start into wrathful animation; and a wail of indignation has gone up at the base ingratitude with which those who placed country before party have been rewarded.

And, yet, the lesson has come too late for the present generation; and the next generation will no doubt have to learn it again, for men do not profit by experience. History repeats itself, and each age has its tale of horrors. We look back with amazement at the fatuity which resulted in the loss of our American Colonies; we condemn in no measured terms the folly of the Crimean War; but we have been as little amenable to reason, prudence and justice as were our forefathers and our fathers; and the men of the future, who will speak of the criminal stupidity of expending some 250 millions in the three years' sanguinary work of extinguishing two flourishing autonomous States, will doubtless engage in magnificent national enterprises of their own.

Meanwhile Nemesis will continue to attend upon

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the Liberal party; they have sown to the wind, and they will reap the whirlwind. They will come again into office only to find that the Delilah of Imperialism has shorn their locks, that they are hampered on all hands and that the enemy have assiduously utilised their opportunities to fortify their position. Vested interests have been protected; privilege has been buttressed; monopoly has been strengthened. Not only has there been no progress—this was not to be expected, and a mere temporary halt could have been borne with composure—but there has been appalling retrogression. The Government has lavishly rewarded its habitual “friends,” and betrayed the proletariat who were deluded into trusting it; to those that had been given, and from those that had not been taken even that which they had. All the principal monopolists have exacted increasing tribute; there have been further doles to landlords and further doles to clerics; water has commanded an inflated price which can only be measured in millions; telephones have had their share of the spoil; and the publican’s—or rather the brewer’s—annual licence has been converted into a perpetual tenancy. Additional burdens have been placed upon the poor; the breakfast-table duties have been substantially increased, and protective imposts have been alike covertly and overtly threatened. Labour has, in its struggle with an autocrat, been denied the benefit of the Conciliation Act; and, when deprived by the Courts of the liberties it had long possessed, been rebuffed by Parliament in its efforts to regain them. London

has (though, fortunately, only temporarily) been kept out of the enjoyment of her river, and the popularly elected guardians of her interests have been persistently snubbed. Coercion has been reintroduced into Ireland, and an addition made to the grim account her sons treasure up against us. The principle of taxation without control has been embodied in far-reaching legislation, and the children have been captured by the priests and are, at the expense of the ratepayers, to be instilled with the doctrines of militant churchdom. Thus much has the clock been put back. And with an enormously increased National Debt and a highly inflated military expenditure, reforms which a few years ago were within measurable distance of being accomplished have been indefinitely postponed. What hope now, for example, is there for old age pensions ; what possibility in fact for any measure which necessitates considerable additional revenue ? No doubt it has been shown that huge sums can be raised, and no doubt reforms of the character in question would not eventually add to the national burdens, but would merely involve a more equitable distribution of wealth ; yet the mere fact that all classes are being called upon to largely increase their contributions to the National Exchequer will vastly augment the hostility to further demands, especially if they are for pacific and not for bellicose purposes, and for the present render progress in this direction well-nigh impossible.

The evil that men do lives after them ; and the children yet unborn will have to suffer for the nation's recent debauch. The Liberals when once

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more called to power will discover that the mere attempt to cope with the mischief that has been done during the past few years will tax their energies to the utmost, and that to a great extent the attempt will be in vain. At every step towards the reversal of pernicious legislation they will be arrested by the veto of the hereditary Chamber of monopolists ; whilst they will also be confronted with a perennial drain upon the country's resources which it will be beyond their ability to substantially arrest. In South Africa, especially in its devastated provinces, they will be met with problems of empire which under competent statesmanship would never have arisen, and which will necessitate constant vigilance and considerably entrench upon domestic affairs. At home, it is not improbable they will find themselves in an era of commercial depression, and witness an increase in the ranks of the unemployed, a growth of pauperism¹ and a rising disaffection. And withal they will be haunted by the knowledge that they cannot escape responsibility, and that they have themselves been assisting in erecting barriers to progress. Imperialism has not only rendered the Liberal party impotent for the time being for good ; it has enormously added to the volume of evil against which it is their province to contend.

THE MORAL OF THE DÉBÂCLE

When, therefore, we are invited to amalgamate Imperialism and Liberalism, we are invited to

¹ Since 1900 there has been a steady rise in the number of persons in receipt of relief. And see footnote p. 153.

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attempt the impossible. When Liberals are asked to become Imperialists, they are asked to betray their trust. "The Liberal party," exclaimed Lord Rosebery, with peculiar lack of perspicacity and strange suggestiveness of opportunism, "is suffering from allowing itself to be dissociated from the Imperialist aspirations of the nation";¹ as though it had not suffered for the precise reason that it identified itself with those sinister aspirations, and as though its mission should be to ascertain the popular breeze and trim its sails accordingly. As a matter of fact the Liberal bark was well nigh engulfed simply because it drifted on to the treacherous quicksands of Imperialism, and the catastrophe was due to those who neglected the compass and suffered the vessel to deviate from the true course.

In the careers of parties, not less than in the lives of men, there come crises which determine what a profession of faith is worth. It is easy for an individual to be virtuous when he has no temptation or opportunity to be otherwise. It is easy for a party to pursue a policy from which it has something to gain and nothing to lose. Only when adherence to principles involves sacrifice, do we discover whether the principles have been firmly grasped and exercise their legitimate influence. The average working man has a fair apprehension of the doctrine of political equality as applied to the various ranks of society; but when it becomes a question of applying that doctrine to his wives and sisters, he can often rival the most inveterate monopolist in

¹ See page 68.

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advocating the opposite doctrine. The average Liberal has a lively appreciation of the evils of class supremacy ; but when it becomes a case of national supremacy he can discover nothing but good, providing of course that the supremacy attaches to his own nation. In both cases there exists the sense of superiority, in the one that of sex superiority, in the other that of racial superiority ; and either the full signification of the principles of Liberalism is not grasped or the principles are shamelessly abandoned. Men succumb to individual pride and selfishness, communities succumb to national pride and selfishness ; and, although we may flatter ourselves that in seeking to exercise sway over others we are actuated by a desire to promote their welfare, we shall find, if we seriously and honestly analyse our motives, that egoism in one of its many forms is the mainspring of our actions. The mischief, however, is that whilst individual pride and selfishness are invariably recognised as vices, national pride and selfishness are, under the name of patriotism, exalted into a virtue. And this is why the Liberal, who has not a sure grip of the fundamental principle of political equality, and who does not uniformly seek to make it the test of conduct, degenerates into an Imperialist. Consciously or unconsciously, he does, with more or less thoroughness and with more or less success, apply the principle to domestic problems ; but the moment the problem becomes a racial one the principle is lost sight of, or is swallowed up by a conflicting principle. Liberal Unionism, so - called, and Liberal Imperialism, so-called, are both due to

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this fact: the coercion of the Irish and the coercion of the Boers have a common origin, and are equally destructive of political equality. Unionism is a case of "hold all"; Imperialism is a case of "grab all"; but their rudimentary motive is the same; they are both instances of government by force, and are alike antithetical to the Liberal doctrine of government by consent. Imperialism carries the principle somewhat further than Unionism, and therefore the latter is logically involved in the former. It took Lord Rosebery many years to discover this and hence he laid himself open to the well-deserved taunt to which reference has already been made; but his definite repudiation of Home Rule, if somewhat tardy, was merely the natural result of his growing Imperialism. There is nothing Liberal about Unionism, there is nothing Liberal about Imperialism; so far as they go each is the negation of Liberalism, for both are instances of racial predominance and both spring from national pride or selfishness. The Liberal who once coquets with Imperialism is in grave danger; the Liberal upon whom Imperialism grows will gradually acquire the jaundiced eye; and the Liberal who becomes thoroughly impregnated with Imperialism will ultimately find his political stock-in-trade represented by a clean slate, upon which, having inscribed the word "Empire" in bold characters, he will have little space for anything else.

The Liberal Imperialist, in fact, is called upon to play a double part. He must either be a political Jekyll and Hyde, having two separate existences, or else he must be at war with himself, constantly

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engaged in the vain task of attempting to reconcile two incompatibles. As a Liberal he is for equality, as an Imperialist for inequality ; as a Liberal he is for liberty, as an Imperialist for coercion ; as a Liberal he is for self-government, as an Imperialist for alien government ; as a Liberal he has one set of doctrines, as an Imperialist he has another set ; as a Liberal he seeks to be guided by ethics, as an Imperialist he is swayed by patriotism. But this conflict cannot be indefinitely maintained. One of the principles will have to be abandoned, or one will eventually overpower or paralyse the other ; for no man can serve two masters. A Liberal may indulge in an Imperialist orgy and recover from it ; all depends upon whether or not he has merely yielded to a special temptation and whether or not the debauch has been agreeable. But he cannot repeat the process without grave risk, for each new indulgence tends to undermine his Liberalism, and unless he arrests himself it must ultimately be destroyed or rendered impotent. In any case it suffers, for whatever be the ultimate fate of the man, Imperialism is as antagonistic to Liberalism as water is to fire. Let the spirit of predominance prevail, and the spirit of equality is quenched ; gratify the lust of conquest and the love of liberty is stifled.

The moral for the Liberal party is ; first, to analyse their creed, and ascertain, not merely what they believe, but why they believe it ; and, next, having thus arrived at fundamental principles, never to palter with them. The man who cannot give a reason for the faith that is in him, or who does not make it his one source of inspiration, may be a

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respectable fair-weather saint, but he is not of the material of which martyrs are made. The Liberal who does not fully grasp what Liberalism means, or is not prepared to make it the absolute test of his political actions, may exhibit enthusiasm for domestic reforms ; but he will almost inevitably apostatize at the first shout of "Separatist," "Little Englander," or "Pro-Boer." Only when the political edifice is erected upon the rock of principle, and not upon the sands of opportunism, can it withstand the waves of national prejudice and the tempest of national passions. Only by keeping the polar star of political equality constantly in view can the Liberal pursue an undeviating course, and avoid the snares of patriotic pride and the pitfalls of racial antipathy. But let him have a clear conception and a just appreciation of his lofty creed, and "Imperialist aspirations," as the spirit of predominance is euphemistically termed, will trouble him not ; and strong in the eternal principles of liberty, truth, and justice, he will seek to promote peace, progress, and universal brotherhood. The moral of the Liberal *débâcle* resolves itself into the old injunction to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good.

III

COMMERCIALISM AND IMPERIALISM

THE POPULAR THEORY

EMPIRE, it is generally recognised, imposes a serious strain upon national resources: its maintenance and expansion involve a colossal and constantly increasing expenditure. But, whilst part of this is accepted as the price of "glory," the impression very widely prevails that our commercial supremacy depends upon the pursuit of an Imperial policy, and that the monetary cost is largely in the nature of a sound investment, resulting in the creation of new markets for the products of industry. Lord Rosebery attributes the "enormous burden" to our "pride of empire" and "the protection of our trade";¹ Mr Rhodes, it may be recalled, contemplated the Union Jack as a "most valuable commercial asset"; and the popular belief is expressed in the formula that "trade follows the flag." The theory is that we run the Empire on business-like principles—of course we add, on moral principles and for the good of humanity—and that, unless we incurred the requisite expense, our commerce would suffer to such an extent as seriously to jeopardise our national prosperity. We do not profess to like the ex-

¹ *Speech at Burnley, May 19, 1903.*

penditure; we even sometimes grumble at it; but we feel that it is an expenditure which cannot safely be dispensed with, and that indirectly it is attended with substantial recompense.

The theory, it will be observed, rests upon the assumption that external trade is materially promoted by empire, and is of paramount importance. A further, and in one sense more fundamental, assumption (which is apparently regarded as so self-evidently warranted as not even to call for positive affirmation) is that national prosperity depends upon the state of the commercial barometer. And to this, in the light of recent revolutionary proposals, there should be added the contention of some that the benefits derived from trade (and therefore the national prosperity) can be enhanced by artificially interfering with its natural flow. These are the propositions or hypotheses—stated or implied—which form the substratum of what may be called Commercial Imperialism; and as commerce directly or indirectly engrosses the greater part of the time of the majority of the population, their validity or invalidity is a matter of the highest importance.

That the propositions are all of them untenable, and that the theory is consequently false in every particular, is what will here be sought to establish; and in attempting this, it may be practically convenient to deal with the assumptions in the order in which they have been stated, although not perhaps in strict logical sequence. The investigation, therefore, will take the form of an examination; in the first place, of external trade, its foreign and imperial proportions, and its relative volume to purely home

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industry; in the next place, of the rationale of trade, and its bearing upon national well-being; and in the third place, of the artificial regulation of trade by protective, retaliative or preferential tariffs, and their effect upon the community. The assumptions which necessitate the first two of these inquiries seem to be common to all Imperialists; the last is called for owing almost entirely to the action of one individual, but as he is the arch-Imperialist and the man who more than any other has for some years swayed his countrymen, and as his action is largely the outcome of his Imperialism, this particular inquiry is not less pertinent or, indeed, less essential.

EXTERNAL TRADE

Now to the men who assert that external trade is materially promoted by empire, and is of paramount importance, a challenge to prove their case is the legitimate reply; and until the evidence is forthcoming, those who deny the truth of the assertion might be content to rest upon their denial. The onus of establishing the contention is upon the individual who makes it, and an opponent is under no obligation to prove a negative. An assertion, however, by constant reiteration acquires a fictitious weight, especially when superficially regarded it seems plausible; and as the Imperialist shows no desire to come to close quarters, the only decisive method of forcing conclusions is to carry war into the enemy's camp. To determine the point at issue it must be ascertained, first, what proportion of our external trade is with our own dominions, and how this has

been affected by the growth of the Empire ; and next, what proportion of the national income is derived from our total external trade, and the precise advantages which the latter confers.

One preliminary *à priori* observation may, however, be permitted. Theoretically there seems no reason to suppose that the natural flow of trade should favour Imperial channels. Sentiment has very little to do with commerce. Speaking generally, and without suggesting that there are never any modifying considerations, it is safe to assert that the dominating object of traders is to sell to the best advantage, and the dominating object of consumers is to buy to the best advantage. If a British manufacturer can supply a foreign merchant with commodities he cannot obtain elsewhere, or can only obtain at a higher price, he will purchase as readily as will a colonial merchant ; and if the latter can obtain commodities on more favourable terms from a foreigner than from an Englishman, he will not give the preference to the Englishman. To deal in the most profitable markets is the prevailing principle, and one with which nationality is seldom allowed to interfere. Nor is the consumer seized with patriotic remorse when yielding to the temptation to secure some article bearing the legend " Made in Germany " ; he may be willing to denounce the unscrupulous foreigner, but if that foreigner sends him bounty-fed sugar he does not hesitate to accept the bounty. In short, apart from adulteration, imitation, puffing and other specious devices whereby actual deceit is practised upon the unwary, the volume of trade will in the long run chiefly depend upon the opportunity

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trade offers for favourable exchange ; and neither buyer nor seller is often troubled with ethnological scruples. This is within the experience of every one, and it is difficult, therefore, to discover the origin of the belief that the Union Jack or any other ensign is a commercial asset.

Of course a Government can by prohibitory laws, or by the imposition of duties, arrest or modify the normal operation of economic forces, and thus prevent or limit the importation of particular goods ; and the acquisition of territory indubitably extends the area of its power. But then, if recourse to such procedure is deemed necessary, it is destructive and not confirmatory of the theory that trade *follows* the flag. Moreover, so far as Great Britain is concerned, it has long abandoned a Protectionist tariff ; and the advocates of Commercial Imperialism have hitherto been content to rest upon the supposed intrinsic merits of the policy, without suggesting that it must be supplemented by the artificial regulation of commerce ; and the very circumstance that proposals—to be hereafter examined—for reverting to such regulation should now be made is, from one point of view, a significant comment upon the policy in question.

What, however, are the facts ? They are readily ascertainable, and one would have thought they would have commanded the attention of the Imperialist, if only for the purpose of quantifying the gain he imagines Empire confers. When we are told that our enormous expenditure is partly for the protection of trade, or that it enhances commercial prosperity,

we are entitled to ask how much trade is protected and to what extent is commercial prosperity enhanced. The expenditure is sufficiently substantial; what proportion of it is recouped to us—is it fifty, twenty, ten, or how many millions a year? Yet nowhere can an answer to such a question be found. Did the Imperialist but once seriously set to work candidly to reply to this very pertinent inquiry, he would have taken the first step towards complete disillusionment, and would soon discover his inability to demonstrate any substantial benefit.

If we examine the statistics of our external trade we shall find that, broadly speaking, only about a third of our exports (of British and Irish produce) are to our own possessions, about two-thirds being to foreign countries; and that only about a fourth of our imports are from our own possessions, about three-fourths being from foreign countries. The exact proportion is not, of course, precisely the same every year; but this gives us a sufficiently general idea of the relative volume of our trade with British and with foreign dominions, and broadly indicates that, so far from the flag proving specially magnetic, the bulk of our external commerce is carried on with our so-called rivals.¹ And if we call to mind that the population of the Empire, excluding that of the United Kingdom, is about

¹ The detailed tables from the years 1855 to 1902 will be found in the *Financial Reform Almanack* for 1904, pp. 133-138. Our imports are greatly in excess of our exports, not because we are, as has been fatuously alleged, sending "golden sovereigns" out of the country (for even with regard to bullion and specie, we import on the average considerably more than we export—see detailed table, *ibid.* p. 9—and indeed must, in the first instance, import all we possess, this not being

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22 per cent., and the population of the remaining portion of the globe about 75 per cent. of the total, and that part of the latter portion, owing to remoteness, difficulty of transit, and other causes, is to a great extent practically inaccessible to our commerce, we see that the relative volume of our trade with British and foreign dominions does not materially differ from the relative number of inhabitants, so that it appears clear the ownership of territory confers no substantial commercial advantage.

But the most pertinent test has yet to be applied. During the last quarter of a century we have added enormously (and at enormous expense) to the dominions of the Crown, annexing about four million square miles, that is to say, approximately one-third of the present total, and increasing our normal military and naval expenditure by over 40 millions, or, in other words, 160 per cent. Yet we find that not only has the growth of the Empire been unattended by any corresponding growth of Imperial commerce, but that the ratio in our external trade remains substantially the same; and although there has been a considerable increase in the total, the proportions as between British and foreign possessions has varied, but infinitesimally. If we compare our imports from and exports (of home produce) to British possessions for the five years

a gold-producing country) nor because, as has also been suggested, we are living on capital (for, as the Inland Revenue Commissioners' Reports show, our savings and our income have enormously increased), but because, amongst other things, our large foreign investments and our extensive shipping involve the payment of interest and freight, which are included in our total imports. We have, in fact, been adding to our capital at home and our investments abroad. See Cd. 1717 of 1903.

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1875-79 with those for the five years 1895-99, we discover that the average percentage they bear to our total imports and exports has only decimally altered; the imports being 22·1 for the first period and 21·6 for the second, and the exports being 33·1 for the first period and 33·8 for the second.¹ In 1900 the percentage was still more in favour of trade with foreign countries, for of the total imports the percentage from British possessions declined to 21, and of the total exports the percentage to British possessions declined to 32·4. It is true that in 1901, whilst there was a still further decrease in the percentage of imports, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of exports; but the ravages caused by the Boer War created a demand which very materially stimulated shipments to South Africa, and a similar observation applies to 1902 and 1903. Now, however, that this artificial boom has spent itself, the old ratio is being steadily approached.

The statistics, then, of our exports and imports confirm the conclusion at which we theoretically arrive. If our experience of human nature, and the working deductions we habitually draw therefrom, indicate that sentimental considerations seldom enter into commercial transactions, and that it is not likely trade should specially favour Imperial

¹ See tables in *Financial Reform Almanack* for 1904, pp. xix. and 133-138. It should also be borne in mind that, in consequence of the extension of the Empire, some of the trade formerly classified as being with foreign countries is now classified as being with British possessions; so that to this extent not only is the latter increased, but the former is decreased, and this makes the result of the above comparison still more significant.

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channels, inductive investigation demonstrates that, as a matter of fact, the flag has not proved to be a valuable commercial asset, and that, though we have enormously added to our territory, there has been no corresponding mercantile benefit. Trade increases, but its ratio remains substantially the same ; Imperial expenditure is not necessary for its "protection," the expansion of the Empire does not alter the ratio. Our dominions do not buy from or sell to us because they are in allegiance to the British Crown ; other countries do not refuse to send us their merchandise or to take our own in exchange although we have no authority over them. So far from it proving profitable to resort to conquest in order to secure markets, there is no profit in the business ; despite protective tariffs the whole world is, directly or indirectly, the market for every nation that can compass it and has the capacity and wish to engage in international exchange. And, as has been frequently pointed out, the prosperity of foreign countries makes for the prosperity of our own ; their productive activity, instead of giving rise to apprehension and jealousy, should be a cause of satisfaction ; the more they themselves produce, the more they are able to offer for our produce ; and if there is any benefit at all in external trade, that benefit is thereby increased.¹ In short, empire

¹ In view of Mr Balfour's manifesto in favour of retaliation it is interesting to note that not long prior to its publication, when in a more rational mood, he distinctly recognised the above truth. Speaking at the annual dinner of the Iron and Steel Institute on May 8, 1903, he stated : "I am one of those who profoundly distrust the current creed—the creed which is largely current—that the prosperity of one nation is the adversity of another ; that he best serves the industrial prosperity

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does not advance our commercial interests ; there is, in this direction, no appreciable compensation for the heavy burden it entails.

The first part of our investigation is not, however, yet completed ; for the assumption under consideration is, it will be remembered, not merely that external trade is materially promoted by empire, but that external trade is of paramount importance. Indeed, but for this latter belief, it is probable the former would not prevail ; and although, if dominion does not in fact materially advance commerce, it would not avail the Imperialist could he demonstrate that external trade is as important as he supposes, the question is nevertheless of fundamental interest and worthy of not less careful examination. The general opinion seems to be that exports afford the only reliable index to progress ; purely domestic industry receives but scant consideration ; and the extent of the benefit derived from production and exchange within the country of goods for home consumption is apparently not realised. We have seen that no attempt is made to quantify the postulated gain from our Imperial trade ; equally true is it that no attempt is made to quantify the gain from our entire external trade, or to ascertain what proportion it bears to our total trade. If such an

of his own nation who attempts to depress the industrial prosperity, or to snatch a share of the common work of industry from some other nation. I believe this to be utterly untrue. . . . The riches of one nation conduce, believe me, not to the poverty, but to the wealth of another nation ; and if we could double or treble by the stroke of some fairy wand the wealth of every nation in the world but our own, depend upon it our nation would greatly profit by the process."

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attempt were made, it is probable the disillusionizing process would be complete.

As a matter of fact only a comparatively small portion of the national income is derived from external trade. The total estimated amount of that income from every source (that is, including both "commodities" produced and "services" rendered) is, in round figures, 1800 million pounds per annum.¹ But our total exports of British and Irish produce, taking the highest figures hitherto recorded, only amount to 291 millions, so that even their capital value is merely equal to less than one-sixth of the nation's earnings. The capital value of these exports, however, does not, of course, represent income from external trade; for if we had no foreign markets, we should still have the goods (or other goods which, under the altered conditions of industry, the same capital and labour would produce in their stead). It is the profit derived from the sale of the exported goods which alone constitutes income from this particular source; just as a merchant's income is not the value of the goods he sells, but the difference between their total cost to him and the price he obtains for them. Now, if we assume that this profit is, on the average, 10 per cent. (a rather liberal assumption) the amount is 29 millions, or not one-sixtieth of the total income. Even if we add a like profit on our re-exports (that is, imports subsequently transmitted abroad, and consisting for

¹ See *Fabian Tract* No. 5, pp. 2, 3, where the basis of this estimate is given. London: The Fabian Society, 3 Clement's Inn, 1904. Sir Robert Giffen, at the meeting of the British Association, September 11, 1903, placed the amount at £1,750,000,000. Professor A. L. Bowley has more recently estimated it at the above £1,800,000,000.

the most part of raw material and food, say 70 millions), the amount is only increased to 36 millions, being just equal to one-fiftieth of the total income.

Although, however, this is meeting the Imperialist on his own ground, it must in candour be added that it does not do him justice, and that to arrive at the facts the investigation must be of a different character. The truth is that the volume of our exports, to which so much importance is attached, affords no adequate guide to the proportion of national income derived from external sources ; for, in the first place, foreign countries are largely indebted to us in respect of investments made with them upon which they pay interest ; and, in the next place, we are the great ocean carriers, and obtain a substantial revenue from the freights of the goods we carry, and neither of these items finds any place in our table of exports. More accurate data for the investigation, therefore, will be, not exports but imports (those imports, the growth of which, strangely enough, is often regarded as alarming). The total amount of these—again taking the highest figures hitherto recorded—is 543 millions, of which, however, we re-export 70 millions, leaving 473 millions ; and if from this we deduct the amount of our exports of home produce (that is, goods we send away in part return for what we receive), 290 millions, we have a net balance of 183 millions, thus indicating that only about one-tenth of the total national income is traceable to external sources. Of this 183 millions, 63 millions represents interest on foreign investments, and is not therefore due to current external trade, which latter can only

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be credited with the balance of 120 millions; so that, although this shows a much higher percentage than is disclosed by a mere examination of exports, it indicates that the net proportion of national income derived from external trade is merely one-fifteenth of the total. Of course, however, the precise fraction is not of importance; it is sufficient to know that the amount is comparatively small.

But here, possibly, the interpellation will be made that the whole of our imports, less only our re-exports, constitutes income from external sources; and that, after deducting the proportion which represents interest, there still remains 410 millions derived from external trade, and without such trade our income would be less by that amount. Even if this were true, it would merely show that less than one-fourth of our income is traceable to this particular source, and that for more than three-fourths we have to look at home. But, although the 410 millions is, no doubt, represented by foreign goods, it is not true that our income would be less by that amount if we had no external trade; for in the absence of such trade we should, as has already been pointed out, either possess the commodities we now export, or if (as would no doubt be the case) we partly ceased to produce them in consequence of the absence of foreign demand, we should then instead necessarily occupy ourselves in producing other commodities for home consumption to fill the vacuum due to the corresponding absence of foreign supply. Of course we should produce at greater cost, and in fact be in the same position as if living under an absolutely effective

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system of "Protection"; but whilst this would be a grave disadvantage, it is obvious that the proportion of our income which is now embodied in foreign merchandize would not be wiped out, but would to a great extent merely change its form, that is to say would be embodied in the additional home produce. There would be no diminution in our productive powers (although they would in some directions be exercised under less favourable conditions); these are not affected by markets, but depend upon land capital and labour; and it is only the particular manner in which they shall be employed that is determined or affected by demand. If all external trade ceased, the necessity for production would not be in the slightest degree diminished (rather it would be increased), but industry would to some extent be diverted into other channels in order to directly meet those wants which are now indirectly met by the exchange of some of the products of present industry for the products of other nations. In short, *cæteris paribus*, there would be no corresponding variation in the volume of wealth produced, but it would partly take a different form—industrial activity would in some directions be smaller, but in other directions greater. Although we derive the equivalent of upwards of 400 millions from external trade, we have to earn it; and we are primarily indebted for it, not to the customer, but to the labourer.

Of course it is not to be denied that if foreign nations were suddenly and extensively to close their ports, this would be most disastrous; for it would dislocate a considerable part of our commercial

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machinery, cause a loss of fixed capital, and for the time being throw many workmen out of employment. When particular industries have once been established on a large scale, any grave general diminution in the demand for their products is inevitably attended with calamity. Indeed, this is proportionately true as regards merely temporary fluctuations, and a prolonged winter or a wet summer will severely handicap certain trades. Similarly, improvements in production, whereby existing processes are superseded, result in a definite loss during the transition state; scientific discoveries may mean ruin to those who have embarked their capital in enterprises thereby rendered obsolete; and as this reacts upon the community, the nation suffers, and progress has its price. The injury, however, which it would thus be possible for other nations to inflict upon us would not, it must be admitted, be attended with the material compensation and ultimate benefit which rewards the expansion of knowledge; and an extensive boycotting of our goods could not, under existing conditions, be regarded with equanimity, especially as the consequent diminution of our imports (which mainly consist of food and raw material) would make it more arduous to supply our wants. But the indubitable fact is that it would not pay foreign nations preëmptorily and permanently to close their markets, any more than it would pay us to take a similar course; the policy would be a suicidal one. If our existing industries are on a scale which calls for foreign markets, the same is true of theirs: if they are to continue to export (as they are all

anxious to do, and to an increasing extent) they must continue to import ; if they send us merchandize, they must take ours ; and if they attempted, from whatever motive, seriously to embarrass our external trade, the attempt would recoil upon themselves. Moreover, unless they united and presented a solid front, they would leave us almost unscathed ; for the ramifications of exchange are such that isolated action is of little avail ; and, indeed, it is probable goods directly boycotted would ultimately reach the same country by circuitous routes, at greater cost to the purchasers. However this may be, so long as we are able to freely import we may rest assured that we shall continue to export ; and we need not fear the loss of foreign markets if we desire to retain them and are able to supply them ; whilst any gradual variation in demand, such as occurs at home and under normal conditions, must continue to be met, by that gradual adaptation to altered conditions which is constantly taking place. And in no case can negative considerations carry weight. The positive advantages of international trade have yet to be briefly indicated ; but although other countries could, if anxious to do so and willing to pay the price, inflict an injury upon us by abruptly closing their ports, the fact that they wisely refrain from taking such a course is no actual addition to the positive advantages, whatever they may be ; and to regard it as such would be somewhat suggestive of the ingenious logic of the child who credited pins with saving lives by not being swallowed.

That external trade is, however, attended with

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considerable benefit is unquestionable, and, indeed, has indirectly already been shown ; so that there has certainly been no desire to minimise its real significance, by pointing out how comparatively small is that portion of the national income which is directly traceable to this source. And, curiously enough, the actual nature of the benefit seems to be largely ignored by those who look only to what they term our commercial supremacy ; in grasping at the intangible they fail to grasp the tangible. At any rate their chief concern is to outstrip foreign nations, as though we could only progress by keeping others back ; their constant anxiety is to increase exports, whilst the correlative increase of imports is regarded as ominous and detrimental to our own industries. And yet, as has been seen, it is only through the medium of these imports that the benefit is conveyed ; whatever advantage we derive is embodied in them. The national gain from external trade may be summed up in a sentence : it consists in conferring upon all the countries which exchange their produce a very large portion of the natural advantages possessed by each ; in other words, it enables them to obtain commodities they could not themselves produce, and to obtain other commodities they could only produce at greater cost. Climatic conditions, the fertility of land, mineral deposits, vegetable growth, animal life, all vary with latitude and longitude ; and by labour being devoted at any given spot to the production in abundance of those commodities for which there are special facilities, and by exporting some of such commodities in exchange for other commodities

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similarly produced, a greater return is obtained to labour, and wants are supplied at less cost than they would otherwise be. But these benefits must be reciprocal; and it is because the Imperialist ignores or inadequately realises this, that he is jealous of the growth of foreign industry.

Commercial prosperity, then, is not to be gauged mainly by external trade; this only accounts for a comparatively small portion of the national income. Nor does empire promote trade; its ratio as between foreign and Imperial arenas is not in favour of the latter, and remains substantially the same despite territorial expansion. And the explanation is found in the fact that material wealth is due to labour, and not to markets; and that markets are merely the expression of human wants, and not of national sentiments.

THE RATIONALE OF TRADE

A further stage of our investigation is now reached. Although, if empire fails to promote trade, the case for Commercial Imperialism is gone, this does not render less pertinent the question whether the promotion of trade is an object worthy of the admiration it commands. That commercial prosperity is synonymous with national prosperity appears to be taken for granted; and this, though perhaps never actually postulated, presumably lies at the root of the Imperialist contention. An inquiry, therefore, into the rationale of trade should not be unprofitable.

According to the prevailing opinion, the status of

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a community is mainly determined by the material wealth it possesses. We may preach to the individual that riches are but dross, and he in turn may occasionally proclaim that "who steals my purse steals trash"; but the doctrine is rarely reduced to practice by the individual and never by the nation. That it is not to be literally acted upon is obvious, for material things are not only useful but indispensable to life; the mischief is that there is no recognition of its inward significance, and that riches are regarded as the *summum bonum*. Judged by Commercialism, we could imagine that the one object of existence is to "make money," and that the community which possesses the greatest amount of tangible assets or letters of credit, is the most to be envied. To the attainment of this end everything is subordinated; and progress is gauged by the result. If the output of merchandise is enlarged, and the "balance of trade" is in our favour, all is going well: but scant attention is given to the process of enlargement, to the sacrifice it may entail, to its physical cost and suffering, or to the actual use made of the riches which are thus obtained.

John Ruskin struck a truer note and established a healthier standard, when he told us that there is no wealth but life—life, including all its powers of love, of joy and of admiration—and that that country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings.¹ Commercial Imperialism would do well to recall his teaching, if indeed it has ever heard of it; to disprove it, if possible, and if not, humbly to accept it and abandon its own false

¹ *Unto This Last*. London: George Allen, 1900, p. 156.

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standard ; and also to bear in mind the old precept of him to whom this mammonish age renders little practical reverence, although it does him lip homage, namely that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And that which is true of the man is true of the nation ; if it pays little or no regard to its vital welfare and neglects its soul, it is not healthy, however " wealthy " it may be in the material sense of the term.

What should be the ultimate object of trade ? Its present *de facto* object seems to be to secure riches, irrespective of methods (or rather by such methods as are most likely to achieve this one result) irrespective of vital expenditure, and irrespective of final utility. But the one legitimate purpose of trade (including in the term, production, distribution, and exchange) is to satisfy the healthy wants of the community, and to satisfy them by healthy means ; and in so far as it falls short of this standard, it indicates misdirected or wasted labour, and is antagonistic to national prosperity. Yet trade as now organised does not satisfy the healthy wants of the community, and its processes are very largely unhealthy ; it frequently rewards those who work the least with a superabundance, and those who work the most with an insufficiency : it fosters and gratifies the morbid appetites of some, and fails to gratify the natural appetites of others ; to many it denies altogether the opportunity of employment, whilst at the same time it supports in voluntary idleness a parasitic class ; and it pays little regard to final utility, and often results in disutility. Hence, in

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many ways it falls short of the true standard ; and to this extent it is not conducive to national well-being. Despite the boast that we are the richest country in the world, the amount of poverty that prevails is appalling. If it is true that there are several millions who are on the verge of starvation, if it is true that there are large numbers who do actually starve, if it is true that many of the methods of production are gravely injurious to health, and so far from promoting life tend to death—and all these things are true—then our system stands condemned, and a mere increase of trade under such a system, instead of being a sign of prosperity, is an indication of adversity, and points to the acquisition, not of “wealth” but of “illth.”

The root fallacy of the position, from the national point of view, is found in the fact that industry is dominated by the one idea of private profit—“profit” in the commercial sense being, not the gain to the community arising from the production and distribution of useful things, but the gain to the trader arising from the sale of anything, whether useful, useless, or disuseful, at more than it cost him. Of course there is a partial gain to the community, or the community would speedily cease to be ; the capitalist cannot appropriate the whole, since capital is of no avail without labour, and to secure this some portion of the produce must be ceded to the labourer. And of course, also, much of the production results in utilities ; since every one demands necessities in the first instance. But these results, so far as they obtain, are really incidental to the system instead of fundamental, as

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they should be. Industry is organised, not by the community with a single eye to the benefit of the community, but by the owners of the instruments of production with a single eye to their own benefit ; and the comforting theory is that, if the units all pursue their own interests, the interests of the body-politic will be best promoted. This would not be true even if all the units started on equal terms ; the extent of its falsity under a *régime* where they start on gravely unequal terms is demonstrated by the results which stare us in the face, and to which reference has already been made.

Industry thus organised is accompanied by two evils, wrong production and mal-distribution ; it results in an insufficiency of necessities on the one hand, and a plethora of luxuries on the other ; the healthy wants of some remain unsatisfied, because the unhealthy wants of others are gratified. There is something rotten in the State when large numbers live from hand to mouth, with intervals of starvation or semi-starvation, and yet as much can be expended in a fashionable entertainment as would keep a hundred families in comfort for a year. And this rottenness is the natural outcome of our commercial system, with its false theories, its false aims, and its false criteria. Concerned only with accumulating riches, without regard to their cost, their nature, or their destiny, it results in a waste of energy and in the atrophy of the workers. What commodities are produced is immaterial so long as they command a "profit" ; they may be shoddy or disserviceable—razors that will not cut, or bowie knives that will—they may be incapable of supplying any legitimate

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craving, or may minister to an illegitimate craving. And how the commodities are produced is equally immaterial ; it may be in a poisonous atmosphere, it may be by deathly processes, and it may be by draining the vitality of the labourer, nourishing him worse than cattle are nourished (for they cost money to replace, and he does not), and regarding him, not as a man to whose sustenance production is subservient, but as a machine which is merely subservient to production. Goods thus begotten are not wealth ;

“ Wives and mithers maist despairin’ ca’ them lives o’ men ” ;

and a nation which accumulates much of its so-called wealth in this way is not rich, but unutterably poor. It is not concerned with true wealth, namely, well-being ; it is promoting, not life, but death. Material wealth consists in useful and pleasurable things, things possessing the capacity to satisfy a good human want ; and to fulfil its purpose it must be distributed so as to give a maximum satisfaction of the legitimate wants of all. “ The final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures.”¹ This is the philosophy of Ruskin, and it has never yet been successfully impugned.²

But Commercial Imperialism has not the faintest conception of this philosophy ; it is only concerned with perpetuating the present object and methods of production ; so far from ever having realised their

¹ *Unto This Last*, pp. 64-5.

² For a scholarly exposition, analytical and critical, of Ruskin’s teachings see Mr. J. A. Hobson’s book, *John Ruskin, Social Reformer*. London : James Nisbet & Co. 1899.

inherent viciousness, it regards them as eminently moral. It does not pay regard to the real nature of wealth, to its utilities or its due appropriation ; it looks only to production and sale and not to consumption or use. Its one aim is to secure "new markets" with enhanced "profits" ; its theory of trade is, not the placing of useful merchandise where it is most needed and with a view to nourish life, but the placing of any merchandise anywhere (and whether at the bottom of the sea does not matter, if it is adequately "insured") with a view to "make money." Hence it combines with its quest for additional "outlets" a demand for "cheap labour" ; its measure of cheapness being, not a diminished expenditure of energy or vital force, but an increased exploitation of this vitality. And so the process goes on in sinister circle. Starting with a fundamentally vicious conception of the object of production and exchange, it proceeds by fundamentally vicious means to acquire additional territory in the belief that that object is thereby promoted ; and having acquired the territory, it comes back to its vicious system of production and exchange, and thus it works round and round in the same immoral groove.

For let there be no mistake about the matter. Although Imperialism does not promote the welfare of the nation ; although it does not even add to the entire volume of trade ; it does promote the sordid interest of certain classes, and enables them to appropriate a larger share of the produce ; and it breeds an army of officials and parasites who are all interested in its maintenance and extension. Even the work of destruction involved in the

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acquisition of new territory, for the time being "makes it good for trade" (to use the common expression) and by creating a largely increased demand for some commodities—commodities which are essentially "illth" and not wealth—and indirectly for other commodities, gives an impetus to production, calling for additional labour, and thus temporarily increasing wages; so that the very workmen are befooled into advocating an Imperial policy. And the men who are concerned with administration, the countless hangers-on, and all those who are seeking a profitable outlet for the employment of their superfluous wealth, favour the process, very often honestly believing it inherently beneficial because it proves advantageous to them, and thus failing to realise either its actual economic or ethical nature. Nor is it an insignificant fact that it is those industries in which the vices of the present system are most exemplified which are specially fostered by the process. It is the "parasitic trades," the trades which by "sweating" the workers and in other ways shortening their lives, are obtaining a supply of labour force not paid for, and by "deteriorating the physique, intelligence, and character of their operatives, are drawing on the capital stock of the nation"—it is these trades which are among "the strongest competitors for the world's custom," and which, by reason of their being thus "subsidised," and as the result enabled to sell at a lower price, can most readily command markets and stimulate exports.¹ The captains of these parasitic

¹ See *Industrial Democracy*. By Mr and Mrs Sidney Webb. Vol. ii. pp. 751-58. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1897.

industries, therefore, are peculiarly interested in any policy which is supposed to create additional outlets for merchandise, and Imperialism thus promotes the very worst methods of production, and tends to emphasise and perpetuate the evils of Commercialism.

New markets for our produce? "What," as has been said elsewhere,¹ "are new markets but an increased demand for commodities, and is not the fact staring us in the face that there exists a volume of unsupplied demand at home? What is the cry of the poor but a demand for commodities; to what is their physical privation due but to an insufficient supply of necessities? There is a grim irony in our seeking to establish dominion over other nations in order to create a new class of consumers when we have millions at home only too anxious to increase—and properly increase—consumption if they got the chance." Let the Imperialist go to the "submerged tenth," to the myriads who are on the border line of starvation, to the men and women who are doomed to penury, or even to those who, if not suffering actual physical deprivation, can infuse but comparatively little joy into their lives, and he will find sufficient "demand" to satisfy him.

Aye! but there is no "profit" to be derived from these men and women, except by exploiting them; they have nothing but their labour to offer, and for that they are already paid whatever wage it will command. Besides, much of their labour would not be required if markets did not keep pace with population. What would be the use of employing

¹ *Patriotism and Ethics*, p. 205. London: Grant Richards. 1901.

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them to produce, if we could not find an outlet for the produce? They do at any rate get something now, but they would then get less; an enormous number fail to find employment as it is, and we should only add to that number if we imperilled our commercial supremacy. Indeed! And does not an increasing population demand an increasing production; does not the owner of every pair of hands also possess a mouth? Suppose, instead of fitfully employing those hands to fill some mouths to surfeit, leaving bare scraps for the actual producer, we give him the opportunity of regularly employing his hands in providing ample supplies for his own mouth; suppose, instead of producing for "profit," we tried the system of producing for "use," and instead of adhering to methods which result in superfluous wealth going to the wrong persons, we resorted to methods which resulted in sufficient wealth going to the right persons; would not that be eminently beneficial from the national point of view, however unsatisfactory it might be to the present monopolists? At present, only thirteen thirty-fourths of the nation's income reaches the pockets of the manual labour class, who form the bulk of the community and produce the bulk of the wealth; let labour be but equitably rewarded, and the problem of markets would settle itself. So long as there is a single individual with a single want unsatisfied, there is scope for the employment of labour; and if the wants of all can be satisfied with a given quantity of labour, the only result is that the necessity for increasing that quantity disappears. And should we reach the stage when our material

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needs can be met by a smaller amount of work, thereby affording or increasing that leisure which can be devoted to meeting needs which are not material and enabling us to live a fuller life, would that be a result to be deplored?

What a miserable business this Commercial Imperialism is! We spare no effort to secure new markets for our manufactures; we go on increasing our output at a real cost that is truly direful, paying little regard to comfort or health, making our cities more congested, expanding the area of our grimy towns, massing our people amidst nothing but bricks and mortar and often in sties where we should prudently abstain from stabling our horses, blocking out the genial sunshine, rooting up the grateful verdure, converting the lives of legions into one monotonous round with nothing to cheer them on their road to a weary and premature grave; and all that our commercial supremacy may be maintained, that our merchants' balances may be more inflated, that we may add to the number of our millionaires, and that we may pile up so-called wealth and be able to boast of our riches. That our means of subsistence are largely derived from our manufactures is true; that it would be difficult for us to produce all the food we require is possibly true; and that, if we could, it would involve a somewhat greater expenditure of labour is no doubt true. But, manufacturers though we are, this, at least, we can do—we can see to it that we manufacture under sane and wholesome conditions; we can see to it that an atmosphere impregnated with the smoke from the factory is not the only atmo-

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sphere the toiler has to breathe during his waking hours, or that he does not merely exchange it for a fetid atmosphere during his sleeping hours ; we can see to it that when his day's work is done he can inhale the pure air of heaven, and that his work is not so prolonged as to give him little chance of even inhaling that save through his bedroom casement ; we can see to it that he is not regarded as a machine, to be kept running as long as possible and at the lowest cost for fuel ; we can see to it that he has full opportunity for employment so as to satisfy his wants, and that industry is organized for the benefit of all and not for the preponderating gain of a few. In some of these directions there has been progress, but it has been very slow and very limited, whilst in other directions the evils have been increased. We want more Bournevelles, more Port Sunlights, more "Garden Cities" planted in our midst ; and, above all, we want gradually to revolutionise our methods of trade, which we shall never do until we completely revolutionise our conception of the object of trade. The crying need is, not increased production, but right production ; not more material wealth, but the equitable distribution of wealth ; not new markets, but new aims ; not the acquisition of additional territory, but the civilising of what we have got ; not the subjugation of the foreigner, but the subjugation of ourselves.¹

THE ARTIFICIAL REGULATION OF TRADE

Yet the latest device of our arch-Imperialist takes the form of a proposal which, if adopted, would

¹ See pp. 148-151.

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render the lot of the workers more deplorable still, would intensify all the evils of the present system, and deprive us of no inconsiderable portion of the benefits derived from what social progress has been made during the last fifty years. The working man has at the present time the advantage of a cheap loaf; and although this is unfortunately not everything, it is something. If industry is increasingly carried on under onerous conditions, Free Trade has conferred upon the producers advantages which were denied to former generations; although monopoly characteristically manages to intercept some of the benefits. Grave though the total volume of poverty is, its ratio to population has materially declined;¹ and if the labourers have been increasingly withdrawn from the soil, they obtain more from the soil than their progenitors did. The evils from which we suffer are in greater evidence in Protectionist countries; the national wealth they produce is less per head, and the workers' share is less. By freely opening our ports, we have added to our natural advantages no inconsiderable portion of the natural advantages possessed by other nations.

But now a scheme is promulgated the effect of which would be to reverse all this. We are invited to retrace our steps, to resort to the system of our ancestors, impede imports and tax our food. And this—at least so the mandate originally ran, although the discovery has since been made that it is to save ourselves from ruin—in the interests of our Colonies, and in the cause, forsooth! of Imperial unity. Canada

¹ A reaction has, however, set in, as part of the price of reckless Imperialism. See footnote, p. 81.

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and Australia, which possess vast tracts of fertile land compared with which the whole area of the British Isles is insignificant, are (in conjunction with our own ground-landlords) to levy tribute upon the grimy toilers of our towns, that the Empire may be consolidated and the hated foreigner defied. Since trade does not follow the flag—as Mr Chamberlain appears to have tardily discovered—it is to be made to follow the flag; the latter is to be gilded, and then perchance traitorous trade, which is always attracted by gold, will be loyal to the Union Jack. Our Colonies are to be bribed into fealty; “Little England” is to bear a still larger share of the burden of empire than at present; the Mother Country is to command the affection of her offspring by working harder for their benefit, and is to show the insolent German that she will not brook a snub to them. Already have the British workman and his children been mulct in their sugar and jam in the supposed interests of the West Indian planters, and now it is sought to extend the process, with the ultimate result of a substantial increase in the cost of the bulk of our foodstuffs.

Now Mr Chamberlain can scarcely be unaware of the economic effect of his proposals, whatever sophistry he may employ in his attempts to capture the ignorant. His past speeches show conclusively that he fully understands the subject, and knows—or, at any rate, did know—that a tax upon imported food will be attended with no pecuniary recompense, adequate or inadequate; indeed, the case against Protection and Colonial preference has seldom been

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more vigorously stated than by him. Let a few quotations be made, for they help to appraise his new scheme at its worth.

"I can conceive it just possible, although it is very improbable, that under the sting of great suffering, and deceived by misrepresentations, the working classes might be willing to try strange remedies, and might be foolish enough to submit for a time to a proposal to tax the food of the country; but one thing I am certain of, if this course is ever taken, and if the depression were to continue, or to recur, it would be the signal for a state of things more dangerous and more disastrous than anything which has been seen in this country since the repeal of the Corn Laws. . . . A tax on food would mean a decline in wages. It would certainly involve a reduction in their productive value; the same amount of money would have a smaller purchasing power. It would mean more than this, for it would raise the price of every article produced in the United Kingdom, and it would indubitably bring about the loss of that gigantic export trade which the industry and energy of the country, working under conditions of absolute freedom, have been able to create."¹

"The owners of property—those who are interested in the existing state of things, the men who have privileges to maintain—would be glad to entrap you from the right path by raising the cry of Fair Trade, under which they cover their demand for Protection, and in connection with which they would tax the food of the people in order to raise the rents of the landlords. . . . Property cannot pay its debt to Labour by taxing its means of subsistence."²

"As to the prospect of any return to Protection in any shape or form, I think it is inconceivable that the agricultural interest would allow manufactures to be protected while food imports went free, and I think it equally improbable that the working classes of this country would

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons, August 12, 1881.*

² *Speech at Birmingham, January 5, 1885.*

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ever again submit to the sufferings and to the miseries which were inflicted upon them by the Corn Laws in order to keep up the rents of the landlords. If that is the programme of the Tory party, we have only in answer to it to recall the history of those times when Protection starved the poor, and when the country was brought by it to the brink of revolution. . . . That is not a retrospect which, I think, would be favourable to any party or any statesman who should have the audacity to propose that we should go back to those evil times.”¹

“I tell you that any proposal to tax corn is a proposal to put rent in the pockets of the landlords, and that any proposal to tax manufactures is a proposal to put profits in the pockets of particularly favoured manufactures. Ah, well! I do not think that you will be led away by these absurdities.”²

“This proposal requires that we should abandon our system in favour of theirs, and it is in effect that while the Colonies should be left absolutely free to impose what protective duties they please both on foreign countries and upon British commerce, they should be required to make a small discrimination in favour of British trade, in return for which we are expected to change our whole system and impose duties on food and raw material. Well, I express again my own opinion when I say that there is not the slightest chance that in any reasonable time this country, or the Parliament of this country, would adopt so one-sided an agreement. The foreign trade of this country is so large and the foreign trade of the Colonies is comparatively so small that a small preference given to us upon that foreign trade by the Colonies would make so trifling a difference—would be so small a benefit to the total volume

¹ *Speech at the Eighty Club*, April 28, 1885.

² *Speech at Birmingham*, November 12, 1885. The dates of these various speeches are noteworthy in view of Mr Chamberlain's recent statement that he had doubts as to free imports as far back as the early eighties when called upon to reply to the Fair-traders, and that his orthodoxy was shattered and his views shaken. *Speech at the Hotel Cecil, London*, July 8, 1904.

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of our trade—that I do not believe the working classes of this country would consent to make a revolutionary change for what they would think to be an infinitesimal gain.”¹

“If you are to give a preference to the Colonies . . . you must put a tax on food.”²

The illustrations might be multiplied, but the object is not to convict Mr Chamberlain out of his own mouth—since that has now become a stale performance—but to adopt his admirable presentation (as far as it goes) of the case for Free Trade, and to show he once fully realised that Protection would not promote trade or add to the wealth of the country, and that it would injure the working classes. He now tells us that circumstances have changed ; but apart from the fact that some of the speeches are of comparatively recent date, it will be noticed that in all of them he was dealing not with particular circumstances, but with economic laws and their effects—that a food tax causes a decline in wages, a diminution of purchasing power, a rise in the price of home produce, an increase in rent, an injury to the export trade, the starvation of the poor, and national disaster. He has himself demonstrated that he is under no delusion on this score, and despite the extravagance of some of his recent utterances³ and the fact that he has eventually become what is euphoniously described as a “ whole-

¹ *Speech at Grocers' Hall*, June 9, 1896.

² *Speech in the House of Commons*, May 28, 1903.

³ Such, for example, as that £92,000,000 of trade we might have done here has gone to the foreigner, and as the result we have lost £46,000,000 a year in wages during the last thirty years ! *Speech at Newcastle*, October 20, 1903.

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hogger," we are driven to seek a better reason for his latest proposals than the one that he has been ensnared by the common protectionist fallacies.

The dominating motive of the Ex-Colonial Secretary he has indeed made clear to us, and his scheme is the logical outcome of his later career. No doubt he is desirous of drawing off the attention of the electorate from the miserable fiasco resulting from his South African diplomacy, and from the egregious blundering of the incompetent Government of which he was so conspicuous a member; and he presumably thought that to spring upon the country this revolutionary project, was calculated to accomplish that object. But this, in any case, is not his principal reason. He is before all things an Imperialist; it is not because he has forgotten his economics, but because he has become intoxicated with empire—so much so that, as he tells us, he dreams dreams of it¹—and has a rooted antipathy to everything which is not British, that he has embarked on this mad crusade. He has himself shown us he is not ignorant of the price that has to be paid; but to the man who has been mainly instrumental in flinging away some 250 millions in conquering a few thousand Dutch farmers, mere pecuniary considerations have no weight. His one dominant idea seems to be the glorification of the British Empire and of Mr Chamberlain as the man who runs it, and incidentally the disparagement of other nationalities and the discomfiture of all who decline to lick his boots; and he pursues this idea with the recklessness of the feverish gambler who, finding that he is losing,

¹ *Speech at Birmingham, January 11, 1904.*

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plunges still more heavily. There was a time when he fully realised the dangers of Imperialism, a time when he truthfully depicted what would be the outcome of the very policy with which he has now long been enamoured, as is sufficiently evidenced by the following extract :—

“There is a great party in this country which seems to have learnt nothing by experience, but which is always eager for an extension of an empire already, I should think, vast enough to satisfy the most inordinate ambition, and which taxes our resources to the utmost in the attempt to govern it well and wisely. If we were to accept the advice which is so freely tendered to us, I predict that the temporary difficulties we have to face would become permanent dangers.”¹

But since he uttered these words he has far outstripped the “inordinate ambition” which was not then satisfied with the vastness of our possessions ; and, although since then the vastness has become much vaster, he now tells us that the British Empire is only beginning :² and, having become the slave of this ambition, he either does not or will not perceive that his latest scheme, if adopted and pursued to its logical end, would ultimately spell ruin. Of course it is quite true that, when a gambler has almost infinite resources, the day of reckoning may be long delayed ; and the public career of our Imperial gambler would have been impossible in any but an exceedingly wealthy country. Sooner or later, however, the time arrives when it is discovered that you may pay too dear for your whistle ; and already is Mr Chamberlain being looked upon as a dangerous

¹ *Speech at Victoria Hall, London, September 24, 1885.*

² *Speech at Birmingham, January 30, 1904.*

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fanatic by some who hitherto regarded him as a heaven-born statesman. A great statesman he is not: he might more accurately be described as a "great wrecker." He once wrecked the Liberal party, and he has now wrecked the Conservative party; he recently wrecked South Africa, and if he is not arrested he bids fair to wreck Great Britain. There is only one way to avert this further catastrophe—Jonah must be thrown overboard.

Although, however, it may be difficult to take the new apostle of Protection seriously when he contends that the commercial prosperity of this country would be promoted by a reversal of our Free Trade policy, there are many of those who measure commercial prosperity by their own personal gains who firmly believe—and they have good ground for the belief—that those personal gains would be enhanced. There is "profit" in the business for some: in other words, the term "Protection" is a correct one; it does protect (at the expense of the community) the particular industries to which it is applied, for it raises the price of the home produce by substantially the amount of the duty placed upon foreign produce of a like character. And hence, the mercantile inspiration of the demand for "tariff reform" is of the same character as that for new markets—Protection is the correlative of Commercial Imperialism. "Just in so far as an Imperialist is logical," says Mr J. A. Hobson in his masterly treatise on the subject,¹ "does he become an open and avowed Protectionist." The

¹ *Imperialism, a Study.* By J. A. Hobson. London: James Nisbet & Co., Ltd. 1902. Page 72.

Saturday Review candidly recognised the same truth when it told us that the Imperialist will have to make up his mind to give up either Imperialism or Free Trade, and that he cannot retain both ;¹ and no sooner does the Duke of Devonshire revolt against the natural development of Chamberlainism than we are informed that "the ranks of the Little Englanders have gained another recruit" and that "the Duke is no longer an Imperialist even in name."² Just so. For if the object in obtaining new territories is to obtain new markets, then as soon as the fact dawns that trade does not follow the flag, steps must be taken to ensure that it shall ; if the Empire is to be self-contained, then Protective tariffs have to be imposed against other countries ; and if the foreigner is to be regarded with commercial jealousy, then "retaliation" is a blessed word.

The latest Imperialist proposals, therefore, are only the natural development of the policy which this country has been persistently pursuing for some years past, whether regarded from the political or commercial standpoint. Mr Chamberlain started from the political, but soon found that the commercial was the more popular ; and his solicitation for the unity of the Empire, and his appeal to sentiment, speedily yielded to a concern for British industry, and an appeal to the pocket, although he rings the changes.

A passing word then is all that need be offered on the one aspect of the question ; and in any case it is the other which is here chiefly pertinent. As

¹ May 28, 1903.

² *The Daily Mail*, November 25, 1903.

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to the unity of the Empire, it is worth while recalling that the Colonies form but a comparatively small portion of our dominions, and are not in fact ruled by us;¹ whilst the wonderful scheme seems unaccountably to take no cognizance of India or our other dependencies, which sadly stand in need of the solicitude manifested for the welfare of our self-governing possessions; and, further, that a unity which is to be promoted by bribes is scarcely worth having. And with regard to the anxiety to provide a weapon of defence against the tariffs of other nations; whilst (as we shall hereafter see²) the scheme is futile for this purpose, it is to be remarked that the avowal of such a purpose is another illustration of the spirit of Imperialism and is gratuitously provocative of international animosity. Foreign countries have not resorted to Protection as a menace to us, nor did we adopt a Free Trade *régime* out of consideration for them; they have simply been actuated by the same motive as we have been, namely, a desire to promote their own interests; and though their economics may be unsound, they have a perfect right to regulate their commercial affairs in their own way, and we have no legitimate grievance.

The important question for us, however, is the effect which the new revolutionary proposals would have upon our national well-being; and the general observations already made upon the point, and the evidence elicited from Mr Chamberlain's former speeches may be supplemented by the enunciation of a few fundamental principles which govern the subject.

¹ See pp. 7-8 and also p. 214.

² Pages 132-142.

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Now in the first place, it is an elementary fact, although it seems necessary to recall it, that duties on imports are paid by the country imposing them, and that their ultimate incidence is upon the consumer. Not that it is theoretically impossible for the duty, or a portion of it, under special circumstances to fall upon the exporter; as, for instance, if he possesses an absolute monopoly of the article, and the sum he obtains for it is merely limited by the demand; since here, the utmost price having already been reached, he must lower it by the amount of the duty in order to effect the sale. But cases of this character, if they ever occur, are too rare to be even regarded as a modification of the general rule; the possibility of imposing the tax on the exporter is so remote that it need not be taken into serious account. There is no device of man by which ordinary import duties can be appreciably and permanently shifted on to the exporting country, for the play of economic forces fixes price (and consequent profit) at such a figure that it simply would not pay to sell at the reduced price; and the exporting country would as the alternative take their exports elsewhere, or, if they could not, then soon cease to produce them at a loss. The result is that the cost to the consumer is increased by the amount of the duty. No one pretends for a moment that British manufacturers pay the tax levied upon their exports by a foreign country, or that they would in the long run get more for their goods (although they might do a larger trade) if the tax were removed; and as a matter of actual fact it will be found that where commodities upon which there is no import duty in Great Britain

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are exported to this country and to other countries which do impose such a duty, price varies (other circumstances being the same) by an amount at least equal to the duty. Mr Chamberlain candidly recognised this when he intimated he was prepared to assume that a preferential food tax would fall upon the consumer.¹ That ethical considerations would not restrain us from compelling the foreigner to bear part of our national burden, if we had the chance, was sufficiently demonstrated in connection with the imposition of a duty on exported coal in 1901; fortunately for morality we cannot do so.

Another elementary fact, however, is of much greater significance. Granted, it may be said, that the importing country has to pay the duty, still the Government must have revenue, and if it did not get it in this way, it would have to in some other; so that it comes to the same thing in the end, and the only effect of raising revenue by a new tax on imports would be that some existing tax could be remitted. Of course this contention ignores the grave objections there are to indirect taxation, one of which is that the cost of collection is greatly increased; whilst, in connection with import duties, considerable expenditure is also incurred in 'taking precautions against smuggling; so that the Government never benefits by the full amount of the tax. But the contention overlooks something far more vital—already incidentally alluded to—namely, that whilst revenue is derived only from the imported taxed produce, the price of all produce of the same character is correspondingly raised irrespective of its source. It is the peculiar vice of

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons, May 28, 1903.*

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protective imposts that they take considerably more out of the pocket of the consumer than they put into the National Exchequer ; and it should be added that this mischief would only be intensified by giving a preference to the Colonies. For example, if a duty is levied upon imported corn, thereby increasing the price, there will inevitably be a similar rise in the price of home-grown corn, although it pays no duty. And if the duty is remitted upon colonial corn, its price will still be substantially the same as that of foreign corn, but it will be from the latter only that revenue will be derived. The very object of a protective duty is to enable the protected industries to get higher prices by eliminating foreign competition at normal price, and this object is effected ; whilst a remission of the duty in favour of the Colonies operates as Protection for their benefit. A duty on foreign food-stuffs, for example, would mean that we should tax ourselves for the benefit of the Colonies according to the extent of the imports from them, and for the eventual benefit of the English ground-landlords according to the extent of the increase in home-grown food, although for a time it might be possible for the farmer to intercept this particular gain. Mr Chamberlain's present comparatively modest scheme would, so far as food alone is concerned, probably result in the consumer paying about 16 millions, of which the Treasury would get only 6 millions, and the Colonies about 1½ millions.¹

¹ It is calculated that the Sugar Convention (combined with the tax, is costing us 8 millions a year (whilst it is almost ruining the confectionery trades), in order to "protect" the West Indian Colonies to the extent of ½ of a million.

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But the mischief would not stop at this, for when Protection is once introduced it inevitably spreads. The moment a duty is imposed which benefits a particular industry, other industries which derive no benefit from this limited protection, but which nevertheless have to share the burden, irresistibly clamour for like protection; whilst, the duty being soon found insufficient to accomplish the object, the natural tendency (exemplified in all protectionist countries) is to increase it; and the ball being once started, rolling, cannot be stopped. The ultimate result might, therefore, well be appalling. The value of our food stuffs was for 1902 probably 820 millions, of which only about 180 millions came from foreign countries and about 40 millions from British possessions, the balance of 600 millions being an estimate of home produce. On these figures (and even if not strictly accurate, they afford an approximate illustration of the point) whilst an import duty of only 5 per cent. would raise the price by at least 41 millions, the Exchequer would get but 9 millions even if (as, of course, would not be the case) the imports from foreign countries were not reduced; 2 millions would represent a bonus to our Colonies (if their exports increased as those of foreign countries diminished, the bonus would be more and the revenue receipts less); and nearly 30 millions would go to the home producer in the first instance, the bulk of which he would have before long to transfer to the landowners in the form of increased rent. Our manufactures would indubitably suffer, and if the duties were extended to raw material (as a matter of fact the greater part of our imports help

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to feed our industries¹), they would suffer still more, and would at once demand Protection ; a yet heavier burden would be imposed upon us, and the process, if not arrested, would ultimately point to bankruptcy. And a process of which this is the logical outcome is vicious *ab initio*. Reduced to its naked simplicity, Mr Chamberlain's proposal to tax imported food is one for making a dole to the Colonies and to British land magnates (a relatively small one to the former and a relatively large one to the latter) at the expense of the British community and primarily of the working man ; whilst his scheme for taxing imported manufactures is one for favouring some industries partly at the expense of others (but at the ultimate expense of the consumer) which in turn would successfully clamour for similar protection, until prices were raised all along the line ;² the natural development of the entire policy being something perilously near national collapse. If we seriously wish to tax ourselves for the benefit of our dominions abroad, it would pay us infinitely better to vote them a direct "grant in aid."

Here, however, it will perhaps be urged that there is another side to the question, and that if, in return for our concessions to them, the Colonies remitted

¹ Apart from this, we cannot give an equal preference to the Colonies, and should raise a hornet's nest about our ears unless we taxed foreign raw material ; for, whilst we import from Canada about twice as much food as raw material, from Australia and New Zealand we import three times as much raw material as food, and from the Cape and Natal we import raw material only.

² In this connection, it is worth recalling the fact that we are world carriers and derive no inconsiderable income from our shipping trade, which protective tariffs would seriously injure.

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in our favour their protective tariffs, there would be compensation for any loss we might otherwise sustain. As to this, it is in the first instance to be observed that there has so far been little indication of an intention on their part to do anything of the kind, and that, as they have very largely built up industries by protective tariffs, it might be rather a serious matter for them suddenly and appreciably to modify those tariffs, and in any case they would suffer a loss of income. But the more pertinent answer is, that it is out of their power to confer upon us benefits commensurate with the injury we should inflict upon ourselves; and that, even if it were within their power, the cost to them would be so great as to enormously outweigh the advantage they derived. The additional burden we should undertake would, as we have seen, be out of all proportion to any gain to them; so that if they undertook a similar burden they would be infinitely worse off. And assuming they were willing to meet us to the fullest possible extent, what would it amount to? Roughly speaking, of their total imports three-fifths are now sent from the United Kingdom and British possessions and only two-fifths from foreign countries, whilst of this latter the greater proportion consists of commodities we could not supply; and there is probably only about a further one-fifteenth of the whole—a possible 8 millions—which they might take from us instead of from foreign countries. Moreover, even if they did initiate the largest reciprocal measures possible, then in the language of John Stuart Mill, “the result of the whole transaction is the ridiculous one, that each party loses much in

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order that the other may gain a little";¹ to which may be added his sarcastic observation on the "vicious theory of Colonial policy, which regarded Colonies as valuable by affording markets for our commodities, that could be kept entirely to ourselves; a privilege we valued so highly that we thought it worth purchasing by allowing to the Colonies the same monopoly of our market for their own productions which we claimed for our commodities in theirs" —a "notable plan for enriching them and ourselves, by making each pay enormous sums to the other, dropping the greatest part by the way."²

Thus much as to the benefits we are to confer upon the Colonies with a view to secure the unity of the Empire; there remains for consideration the injury we are to inflict upon foreign countries in order to coerce them into proper behaviour. What we require, it seems, is a weapon of defence; "Retaliation" is the new economic gospel of Mr Chamberlain's more cautious allies, and the Prime Minister is its prophet. We are, he tells us, "to do to foreign nations what they always do to each other, and instead of appealing to economic theories in which they wholly disbelieve, to use fiscal inducements which they thoroughly understand."³ As we cannot convert these unregenerate aliens, we are ourselves to backslide: hitherto we have been too considerate towards

¹ *Principles of Political Economy*. Book v. chap. x. sec. 1.

² *Representative Government*, chap. xviii. par. 4.

³ *Economic Notes on Insular Free Trade*. London: Longmans, Green & Co. September 1903. It will be remembered that only a few months previously (see footnote, p. 95) Mr Balfour had recognised, and indeed enforced, the truth that the prosperity of one nation con-

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them ; we have generously opened our ports to their goods in a spirit of magnanimity which they have failed to appreciate ; we have bought their produce from philanthropic motives, and not because we wanted it, or because we found it cost us less, or because it fed our people and fed our machinery ; we have not done to them what they always do to each other, and we have set a noble example and have acted in an unselfish spirit. But we must sorrowfully confess that it does not pay ; we have been too neglectful of our own interests (it is a national characteristic), and advantage has been taken of this ; there is nothing left for us but retaliation. So, if other nations will not freely admit our goods, we must henceforth decline to freely admit theirs, and in this way shall we bring them to their senses.

This "weapon of defence" argument has the characteristic feature of all the contentions of Commercial Imperialism, it rests upon an assumption ; there is no attempt to show that retaliation would benefit us—that is taken for granted—and while some ingenuity is displayed in seeking to establish its ethical justification, there is a curious omission to demonstrate how it will operate or why it should prove efficacious. And, strangely enough, the doctrine is being promulgated precisely at the moment when other countries which have put it into practice are beginning to realise how vicious it is ;

duces to the prosperity of another ; it is exquisite to note he now leads one financial organ to observe : "Mr Balfour has just helped to demolish the fiction that the prosperity of one nation is necessarily the prosperity of another nation." (*The Financial News*, September 22, 1903).

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and our own representatives at the principal European capitals furnish us with most instructive reports as to the disastrous effects of tariff wars.¹ Of course, the fact is that had we once since we adopted Free Trade seriously thought it injurious to us, or that we could have effectually "retaliated" upon Protectionist countries by taxing imports from them, we should immediately have ceased to be content to "appeal to economic theories in which they wholly disbelieve"; and what the advocates of this peculiarly contemptible form of Protection have to establish is that the economic theories in which we have believed, if foreigners have not, are in fact unsound, and that they were right and we were wrong. Hitherto we have been satisfied that absolute Free Trade is good for us, even if other nations will not adopt it; now we are told that absolute Free Trade "in a world of Protectionists" is bad for us, and we are invited to revise our own policy because our rivals have not copied it. If they think they can outstrip us by carrying a heavy weight, we are to disillusionise them and have our revenge by carrying one ourselves.

It is no doubt true that, whilst a nation which imposes Protective duties does itself grave injury, it to some extent withdraws from other nations the benefits derived from the free international exchange of goods. Those benefits, as has been pointed out,² are that each country can obtain some commodities which it could not otherwise obtain at all, and can obtain other commodities at less cost than it could produce them for itself; and the only method by which all countries can command to the full the

¹ See *White Book*, Cd. 1938.

² See page 103.

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natural advantages enjoyed by each is by that of universal Free Trade. But unless Protective duties are so high and so general as to veto international exchange altogether, or at least seriously restrict it, the harm they can do to a nation that permits free imports is considerably less than is commonly supposed, and indeed is not substantially appreciable. For it is to these imports that the benefit attaches, that is to say, to the exports of other nations; and the duties they impose is, not on those exports, but on their own imports: the object is not to prevent merchandise going out of the country (for, on the contrary, the one desire is to export as much as possible), but to prevent certain kinds of merchandise coming in, the mistaken belief being that this, by artificially encouraging particular home industries, is beneficial to the nation. A country, therefore, which disowns this creed and, recognising that imports are a boon does not impede them, has no difficulty in procuring them—indeed the absurd complaint is that they enter too freely—and the only injury it can sustain from the Protective duties of other nations is such as may be due to the fact that they operate to somewhat restrict the amount of external trade. But so long as such trade in fact takes place, it is the free importing nation which derives the chief benefit. If all countries abolished their existing imposts an impetus would no doubt be given to international exchange; but, while such countries would ultimately gain enormously, there is little reason to suppose that Great Britain, which has already secured the advantages of Free Trade by

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adopting it, would find those advantages substantially enhanced. At the present time there is no article of foreign origin which we cannot or do not obtain to the extent of our demand, and that at less cost than we could produce it, even where we could produce it at all. With a larger volume of trade it is not impossible that the cost to us might in some cases be slightly less, and that we could import more and increase our consumption, but it is certainly the Protectionist nations, and not ourselves, who would peculiarly reap the benefits arising from the abandonment of the system, for the reason that we (having abandoned it) reap them already.

But is it fair—the inquiry is frequently made—that foreign countries should have a free market for their goods, whilst they deny a free market to our goods? The question exhibits the old fundamental fallacy that what we are mainly concerned with is markets (by which is meant demand, and not supply), that we benefit by getting rid of goods and not by obtaining them. If we once realise that the advantages derived from international trade attach to imports and not to exports—to what we receive, and not to what we part with—and that exports merely constitute the method of paying for the foreign goods we require, we readily perceive that there is nothing unfair to us in the Protective tariffs of other nations so long as they freely send us their goods ; and further that, whilst they take this latter course, their Protective tariffs are futile as against our goods, unless they are willing to make us a present of their own or supply them at less than they would otherwise do. Ah! but they entrench

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their industries behind a bulwark and then compete with us in other markets. Well! have they not a perfect right to do so if they can, and how does the "bulwark" help them or injure us? A bulwark costs money to make and maintain, and a nation which incurs this expense, so far from being thereby able more successfully to compete with a nation which does not incur such expense, only heavily handicaps itself. It produces under greater disadvantages, and can in fact only outbid its competitors, by selling on less profitable terms, if not at a loss. And if it does this, then the purchasers (and we are all purchasers) reap the gain.

Here, however, there jumps up the "dumping" bogie. "Sell at a loss!" it will be said, "yes, that is precisely what is done; having a sure home market, these protected industries can afford to 'dump down' upon us their surplus produce at less than cost price; and if they continue the process they will eventually ruin our own industries, and then they will have us at their mercy and there will be no more selling at a loss." Let us see. In the first place, obviously whenever the dumping process is in operation, we are getting cheaper goods; or, to put it conversely, we are obtaining a higher price for our own goods; our exports are commanding a greater quantity of imports than they would otherwise do; the exchange is in our favour, and the process is therefore to our benefit. In the second place, dumping is not a continuous permanent phenomenon, but is of a temporary fluctuating character; it is not (as has been suggested, without any evidence) the outcome of a design to

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ruin our industries (not one of which has yet been ruined by it), nor is it conceivable that it should ever be, for that would recoil upon its authors ; it is analogous to shopkeepers' sales of surplus stocks at reduced prices, and is due to the fact that the production of particular goods sometimes outstrips demand, especially in the case of protected industries. In the third place, dumping is not the monopoly of foreign nations (who are regarded as hostile to us) ; it is equally characteristic of our own Colonies (who are regarded as friendly to us) and it is even possible that we ourselves are sinners (if sin it be) ; the explanation being of course the same in all cases, namely the desire to "cut a loss." In the fourth place, we are not the only "victims" (or beneficiaries) of dumping, for everybody seizes an opportunity to purchase at less than normal prices ; and when we are told, as Mr Chamberlain tells us,¹ that the United Kingdom is the only country where the process can be carried on successfully and that all other great countries protect themselves by immediately putting on a tariff to keep out the dumped articles, the answer is that this is simply not the fact, and that articles are dumped in highly protected countries which, so far from counteracting this by a prohibitive tariff, take it "lying down." In the fifth place, since the bulk of our imports consist of food and raw material, both of which feed our own industries, it is obvious that any reduction in price, so far from injuring, must stimulate those industries ; the cheap iron and steel, for example, sent us by Germany (to Mr Chamberlain's alarm) positively give an impetus

¹ *Speech at Liverpool, October 27, 1903.*

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to our manufactures and at the same time depress similar German manufactures. In the sixth place, the problem of how to prevent dumping is insoluble unless we definitely veto all imports by imposing absolutely prohibitive duties ; for no scheme could be devised which should automatically shut out particular goods precisely when, and just because, they happened to be offered at "unfair prices"—and indeed, long before the preliminary question of what was "unfair" could be settled in any given instance, the hare would not only be caught, but cooked and eaten. . And finally, if "dumping" is so naughty, and the "dumpor" ought to be scotched, what about the wicked "dumpee"—the wretched English merchant who is so depraved and unpatriotic as to purchase these under-priced foreign goods? The malicious alien we cannot reach, but his more despicable fellow-conspirator is on the spot ; let him be arrested and placed on his trial (say for high treason) before a British jury (who can conscientiously declare that they never bought an article for less than it cost to make), and, if found guilty, dumped down in Portland for the rest of his miserable existence, and then we shall soon stamp out this calamitous influx of cheap goods. Poor dumping bogie—*requiescat in pace* !

It comes back, then, to this, that the amount of injury inflicted upon a Free Trade nation by the Protective tariffs of other nations is merely such as occurs from international trade being to some extent thereby restricted ; and, having regard to the present enormous volume of international trade and to the fact that, even with that large volume, only a relatively small portion of our national income can

be traced to this particular source, such injury is for practical purposes scarcely worthy of consideration. Under universal Free Trade we should no doubt somewhat increase our exports, but as already pointed out¹ there is another side even to this, and it does not follow that the comparatively small commercial gain would be a real net national gain; for, in view of the evils which attach to our present organisation of industry² the vital cost would probably be at least equal to the benefit. The chief aim of the reformer will be, not so much to increase our external trade, which has already reached the point of enabling us to share in nearly all the natural advantages of other countries, but to make our existing trade consistent with and more directly contributory to the solid welfare of the nation.

A policy of "Retaliation," then, is from every point of view unsound: it is uncalled for, useless, and pernicious. If the injury which foreign nations can inflict upon us by their so-called hostile tariffs is comparatively so slight that it can be ignored,³ there is no necessity for reprisals, and the imposition by us of similar tariffs would inflict but comparatively slight injury upon them; Retaliation is a futile remedy

¹ See pages 106-115.

² *Ibid.*

³ Of course, as has already been pointed out (p. 100), if such duties were suddenly made so high and so universal as to seriously dislocate our industry, that would undoubtedly injure us for the time being; but this is practically impossible, and if possible, would be suicidal, whilst retaliative duties would then either be nugatory or add to the mischief. And although particular trades which export largely would suffer loss from any decided increase in the foreign tax on their products, there is no method by which this loss could be prevented, unless it be by taxing the entire community for the benefit of the particular industry—that is, converting a relatively small private loss into a large national loss.

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for what is in the main an imaginary ill. This, however, is only its negative aspect ; on its positive side it is a fruitful source of disease. Whilst it would be attended with no benefit, it would do us harm ; so far as it goes, it shares the vices (already pointed out) which are common to all Protective duties. Even regarding the matter from the limited standpoint of a competition for foreign markets, we should place ourselves at a disadvantage, for the object of retaliative duties is to attack the exports from other countries to us ; and we should therefore be compelled to tax raw material and food,¹ thereby raising the cost of production of our manufactures. Nor is there the slightest reason to suppose a mere threat on our part would result in the lowering of a foreign tariff, for those tariffs are imposed for the purpose of protecting native industries ;² whilst the actual imposition of a retaliative duty would only result in counter-retaliation, of which we have a recent instance in the imposition by Russia of a duty on Indian tea

¹ Raw material constitutes nearly 27 per cent. and food nearly 45 per cent. Of the remaining 28 per cent., 5 consists of crudely manufactured materials and 8 of wholly manufactured materials, both for use in industry. Of the balance, a large proportion consists of "luxuries" which we could not produce, and some of which are already taxed for revenue purposes. And it must be remembered that goods commonly classed as manufactures are really the raw material of many industries, and that it is practically impossible to tax any of these goods without injury to some of such industries.

² Even Professor Ashley, who (with the exception of Professor Cunningham) is probably the only authority of weight that can be cited in favour of the new policy, recognises with regard to retaliation that "it is hardly likely any considerable use of tariffs can be made for this purpose, because the countries which are excluding our goods by high customs are doing so in order to develop the industries themselves." *The Tariff Problem*. London : P. S. King & Son, 1903, p. 132.

as a reprisal for the exclusion of her sugar from our ports. Retaliation, in fact, means, as has been aptly said, that because we are smitten, or choose to consider we are smitten on one cheek, we are to smite ourselves on the other. The so-called weapon of defence is, as has been not less aptly said, a blunt knife with a sharp handle ; in employing it to stab a supposed enemy we shall severely wound ourselves, whilst we scarcely penetrate his skin.

The truth is we cannot even coquette with Protection without paying for the flirtation—the siren, now as of old, is exacting in her demands. It is not infrequently remarked that Free Trade is obsolete ; and that, whilst it might have been all very well when it was adopted, it is not suited to the altered conditions of industry. But there is really nothing obsolete in the fundamental principles of Free Trade ; if, for example, it were formerly true that a protective duty taxes the consumer far beyond the amount of the duty, and that the tax cannot be shifted or converted into a productive investment, it is equally true to-day. The common argument that other nations have progressed and flourished under a Protectionist *régime* is a *non causa pro causâ* ; the fact is that, if they have progressed and flourished, it has been in spite and not because of Protection. When a country has boundless tracts of fertile land (the ultimate source of all material wealth) it is potentially rich : yet, if it artificially fosters manufactures, it is easily deluded into the belief that its prosperity is due to this, whereas it is actually due to the country's inherent resources.

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The progress of the United States, which is often cited as an illustration of the efficacy of Protection, really points the opposite moral ; for throughout this enormous area—nearly thirty times that of the United Kingdom, while the population to be supported is less than double—internal Free Trade prevails. Germany with its restricted area, is finding out that Protection does not pay ; and although vested interests are strong, the mass of the working classes are in organised revolt against the system. France, whilst its area is about the same, has a much smaller population—less than the United Kingdom, although the country is nearly double the size—and as this population is almost stationary, the pressure does not increase. Sweden, which is regarded as a Protectionist elysium, has, since it resorted to an import duty on maize, steadily lost its export trade in bacon, butter and eggs ; whilst that of little Denmark, which successfully resisted the attempt to impose a similar duty, has been rapidly growing. Our own Colonies, however, are not without their object lesson, for they are adding year by year to their debt, and this debt is not to any substantial extent traceable (as ours is) to reckless expenditure in war, but has arisen under a Protectionist *régime* : and enormously as our own debt has increased, theirs has increased in much greater proportion. In Australasia the amount in 1861 was equal to £9, 8s. per head, twenty years later it had grown to £34 per head, and now it stands at £58 per head, whilst our own huge debt only works out at about £19 per head. And unless Australia can accomplish the difficult task of

disclosing additional assets proportionate to its additional liabilities, what becomes of the theory that it has prospered under Protection, still more of the theory that it has prospered because of Protection?

It is often asked why, if Free Trade is so beneficial, other countries do not adopt it. The answer is that when huge industries have been called into being and fostered by tariffs, powerful antagonistic interests have thereby been created; and further, if those tariffs were suddenly abolished, the industries in question would collapse, a vast amount of fixed capital wasted, and workmen thrown out of employment; whilst other fields of labour would not be immediately developed, and a crisis would ensue which would for the time being have most disastrous results. Protection is not unlike a cancer; not only does it draw on the vital resources, but to remove it may involve the life of the patient. If he have a strong constitution, the cancer may not cause much inconvenience, and until it gravely develops, the mischief may not even be suspected: but when it does fully develop, there is great danger in resorting to a drastic remedy; and if it be possible to arrest the disease, and gradually to eliminate it, that is the course of safety. So, where Protection has obtained a firm grasp, although it is a devitalizing malady, at once to eradicate it is dangerous; only by degrees can it be safely combated without running great risks. The case of the abolition of the English Corn Laws may be cited to the contrary, but this affords no parallel to the case of protected manufactures. A tax on foreign wheat only "protected" the ground landlord (just as the

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re-imposition of the tax would benefit him); and although its removal may to some extent have caused agriculture to decline, such removal was really the withdrawal of a subsidy to a parasitic class; it involved no disorganisation of general industry, no loss to the community; but on the contrary it gave an impetus to general industry, and proved an immediate gain to the community. A country, however, in which there are very large protected manufactures, has a most serious problem to face whenever it contemplates adopting Free Trade; whilst the gigantic interests bound up in the existing system are sure to offer determined antagonism. So far from the result of Protection in other countries affording any encouragement to us again to resort to this artificial regulation of trade, it sounds a warning note against embarking in such a fatal enterprise.

We may, however, here be reminded that one of the effects of imposing a substantial duty on imported foodstuffs would, by giving an impetus to their home production, be the stimulating of agricultural pursuits. And this would certainly not be a result to be deprecated: indeed, to those who measure cost of production by the expenditure of vital force it will be apparent that, although all the evils arising from the enhanced price of food would still remain, to the extent to which more of the wage-earning classes were able to live healthier lives there would be a distinct gain. But this is not an argument which lies in the mouths of those who are now advocating a return to Protection, for the reason that they do not measure cost of production by the expenditure of vital force, but look only to the margin of private

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"profit" which can be commanded, and that their object is not to enable the wage-earning classes to live healthier lives, but to "consolidate the Empire," exploit the foreigner and increase exports (that none of these results would be achieved does not alter the motive). Still, if any incidental advantages did ensue, and if they could be obtained in no other way, the candid investigator would have to give them due weight. A duty, however, which should materially stimulate agriculture would indeed have to be substantial—not 2s. on a quarter of corn, but five or ten times as much—and if this were remitted in favour of the Colonies, their competition would have to be reckoned with. But the substantial reply to the argument is that, whilst the incidental advantages would in degree be comparatively slight, they can be secured to a fuller extent in another way. Protection is only a quack remedy for agricultural depression, and the quack exacts enormous fees; it means, as has already been stated, the taxation of the whole people for the benefit of the ground landlords. The evils attendant upon our present industrial system are due to monopoly; to tax food is to still further enrich the arch-monopolist; it is feeding the disease at its source. The true remedy for agricultural depression would require considerable space adequately to expound, and it can only here be suggested. It lies in the direction of introducing a radical alteration in the tenure of land, of raising the standard of cultivation, of increasing the efficiency of labour, of securing effective organisation, and (it may be added) of nationalizing the railways. There is obviously

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something fundamentally wrong when we have millions of acres inadequately tilled, and at the same time a huge army of unemployed. The private ownership of the soil has resulted in the worst evils of monopoly; there is no inducement to render it more productive when the ultimate effect is to raise rent. Whilst enormous increase has been made in the yield of nearly every other industry, agriculture has remained almost stationary: science, skill, capital, energy have been increasingly placed at the disposal of manufactures, but comparatively speaking, the land has commanded few of these favours. Labour is attenuated, capital is inadequate, and organisation defective; the working farmer thinks himself fortunate if he can make both ends meet, and the most fundamentally important of all pursuits has suffered because other pursuits offer more "profit." In a country where land is practically unlimited the entire position is different, but in a small densely populated country like Great Britain there is most pressing need for reform. The monopoly of the soil by a few individuals is directly antagonistic to collective prosperity; and nothing but a drastic alteration of the system will result in the earth bringing forth her increase. A tax on imported food, so far from proving a remedy, would only tend to perpetuate the mischief, at the same time giving rise to the additional mischief already indicated: not by increasing the toll now levied upon labour, but by diminishing and ultimately abolishing it, shall we promote the solid welfare of the nation.

And this leads to one further point, in conclusion.

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Whilst the facts (many of them elementary) to which attention has been called abundantly demonstrate the falsity of the Protectionist's theory, there is yet another fact (not so elementary) with which the Free Trader is confronted ; one which indicates there is a tendency for him to overstate his case, and which emphasises the necessity for that reconstruction of our industrial system referred to when considering the rationale of trade. Free Trade, by itself, is not always an unalloyed good. It induces the specialization of industry, that is to say an increased concentration of labour upon those branches of production where natural advantages can be most fully utilised ; and in Great Britain, therefore, it has given a great stimulus to manufactures. Now it has already been pointed out that, although this may result in the acquisition of more material wealth, material wealth is not everything, and may be purchased at a ruinous vital cost ;¹ and further that, so far even as material wealth is concerned, the men who produce it do not under prevailing conditions derive their legitimate share.² And it has also been indicated that it is those trades in which the vices of the existing system are especially exemplified—the parasitic or subsidised trades—which most readily command markets and stimulate exports ;³ so that, to this extent, the specialization of industry to which Free Trade leads takes the form, as matters now stand, of drawing on the capital stock of the nation. The Free Trader, pure and simple, seldom realises this ; he claims too much, and argues (or rather more

¹ See pages 104-109.

² See page 113.

³ See page 111.

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often assumes) that because unfettered international exchange is beneficial, the community necessarily shares equally in the benefit, and he does not appreciate the subtle way in which part of it is annexed by some to the detriment of others, and that Free Trade is quite consistent with the condition of many of the toilers being most abject. Protectionists, on the other hand, although they sometimes contend in the teeth of facts that import duties would raise wages,¹ come no nearer grappling with the fundamental economic problem. That problem is, how shall industry be organised so as to secure to all the maximum of solid gain, measured not by money, but by the satisfaction of healthy human wants; and to solve such problem Free Trade requires to be supplemented. The Protectionist would abrogate it, would resort to a policy destructive or reductive of its benefits; the social reformer would aim, not at getting rid of the benefits, but at directing them to their proper destination. To promote this, it is necessary that, whilst no restrictions should be imposed on international trade, restrictions *should* be imposed on the exploitation of labour. The effect of industrial parasitism upon national efficiency and national welfaré, and its bearing upon Free Trade, have been subjected to an incisive and lucid analysis by Mr and Mrs Sidney Webb in their

¹ The Board of Trade investigation into "British and Foreign Trade and Industry" (*Blue Book*, Cd. 1761 of 1903, p. 289) shows that the average weekly wages in fifteen skilled trades is; as to capital cities, in the United Kingdom 42s., in France 36s., and in Germany 24s.; and as to other cities and towns, in the United Kingdom 36s., in France 22s. 10d., and in Germany 22s. 6d.; and as the purchasing power in the foreign countries is less, real wages are still lower. It is a significant fact that the only Protectionist country in which even money

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monumental work on "Industrial Democracy,"¹ and no Free Trader can afford to ignore it. "If the employers in a particular trade are able to take such advantage of the necessities of their work-people as to hire them for wages actually insufficient to provide enough food, clothing, and shelter to maintain them in average health; if they are able to work them for hours so long as to deprive them of adequate rest and recreation; or if they can subject them to conditions so dangerous or insanitary as positively to shorten their lives, that trade is, clearly obtaining a supply of labour force which it does not pay for"; and the result is, as is demonstrated, the same as that of the old vicious subsidies or bounties known as a "rate in aid of wages." And under a Free Trade *régime*, combined with unrestricted "sweating," there will be a "rapid growth of particular exports which imply the extension within the country of its most highly subsidised or most parasitic industries." "Seen in this light, the proposal for the systematic enforcement, throughout each country, of its own National Minimum of education, sanitation, leisure and wages, becomes a necessary completion of the Free Trade policy; only by enforcing such a minimum on all its industries can a nation prevent the evil expansion of its parasitic trades being enormously aggravated by its international trade." Hence "the economists of the

wages are higher than in Great Britain is the United States—traceable to its great natural advantages—and there food is the one article that is cheap, for it is home-produced and not taxed. Wages do *not* rise with the price of food

¹ Note, page 111, *supra*. See Vol. ii. Part iii. chap. iii. section (d) and Appendix ii.

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middle of the century only taught, and the Free Trade statesmen only learned, one-half of their lesson"; and what is requisite is, not to unlearn the half already learned, but to learn the other half.¹ Protection is no remedy for the evil. An import duty on the products of the sweated trades themselves would be practically inoperative, for they are not appreciably subject to the competition of foreign imports; and an import duty on other products would equally leave them scathless. So long as any trade is subsidised, by whatever means, it is able to appropriate more and more of the export trade; and what is requisite is, not to tax imports, but to abolish the subsidy. If Protection is an illusory remedy for imaginary ills, it is not less an illusory remedy for actual ills; it would make the former real and it would accentuate the latter. Free Trade is a benefactor, not a robber, but its benefactions are largely intercepted; and our aim should be, not to cut them off at their source, but to divert them into their legitimate channel. It is not "tariff reform," but industrial reform, that is needed.

Commercial Imperialism and Imperial Commercialism illustrate in a painful degree how it is possible for a country to neglect its highest interests in order to pursue a chimera. Empire is expanded in the fatuous belief that it benefits trade, and then it is proposed to restrict trade in the scarcely less fatuous belief that the restriction benefits Empire. Surely never did argument run in a more vicious circle

¹ See also Mr Webb's article on "The Policy of the National Minimum," *The Independent Review*, July 1904, p. 161.

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or exhibit greater misapprehension of objects and methods or of causes and effects. Based upon a gross conception of the nature of wealth, ignoring the ultimate purpose of its production, regarding trade as an end rather than as a means, and measuring success by the quantity of goods disposed of and not by the quantity appropriately utilised, this theory proceeds to advocate the acquisition by physical force and at ruinous expenditure of new "dumping grounds," and when the dragooning process fails proceeds to offer bribes; at every stage ignoring patent facts and running counter to economic laws, and presenting, on the whole, the most insidious plan which the ingenuity of a mischievous imp could devise for producing chaos, disaster, and national retrogression.

Imperialism primarily results in the destruction of the liberties of the conquered race, although, when conquered, self-government may sometimes be ultimately granted them; there is a certain retributive justice in the fact that it imposes shackles on the conquering race. Unfortunately, however, the retribution is not so perfectly meted out as to amount to even-handed justice; for it is generally visited most severely upon the dupes, whilst the schemers either escape or achieve a pernicious success; and it is not easy to arouse the dupes, since, although they realise the suffering, the cause is not patent to them, and if it were, they alone are powerless to remove it. Only by bringing home to the nation as a whole the fact that Imperialism is not profitable—for if it were, morality has not yet sufficiently advanced to pronounce an effective veto—will its

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growth be arrested. The task is not a light one, for the economic factors are numerous and involved ; and a partial survey or presentation readily leads to erroneous conclusions, so that plausible appeals to self-interest can be made. There are, however, not wanting signs that the actual truth is at length being realised, less by force of argument than by object lessons. Our latest Imperial enterprise, upon which we entered with such a light heart, has proved so costly and has so enormously added to our burdens as to be alone calculated to give us pause ; and in his last desperate appeal to racial pride, the reckless gamester who has been so largely instrumental in squandering our treasure has overreached himself, for the logic of a dear loaf can be grasped by the meanest intellect. It may be that this will prove the one benignant episode in his sinister later career ; and if so, it can only be said—would that it had come earlier.

Since the foregoing was in type the Board of Trade Returns for 1904 have been issued ; and they indicate that this was a record year as regards external trade, exports (of home produce) being over 300 millions, and imports over 551 millions. As these figures are somewhat higher than those quoted at pages 97-8 (re-exports, however, remain at 70 millions) the calculations based on the latter call for corresponding variation, but this is very slight and the general conclusions are unaffected. The fact that this record year synchronizes with an increase in the ranks of the unemployed further illustrates the fallacy (see page 96) of gauging commercial prosperity principally by external trade, and emphasizes the need of a just appreciation of the rationale of trade (see pages 104-115 and 148-151).

IV

ECCLESIASTICISM AND IMPERIALISM

THE CHURCH MILITANT

AMONG the forces which make for Empire, the influence of the Church is so potent and so unique in character as to render it peculiarly conspicuous and to suggest special comment. Great Britain is a professedly Christian country ; her religion is "by law established" ; upon her national deliberations "the blessing of Almighty God" is periodically invoked. She maintains a huge hierarchy with the avowed object of proclaiming the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth ; in every village and in every corner of every town her sacerdotal servants are to be seen. Outside this State-appointed and State-controlled ecclesiastic body, but of not less national significance, are various other religious organisations, which equally exist for the presumed purpose of upholding the Christian faith and for promoting Christian life within the community ; and here again, in every village and every corner of every town the ministers of such organisations are found. No doubt, neither church nor chapel commands the adherence of vast numbers of the population, probably not of a majority ; and pathetic inquiries are frequently made as to why the masses exhibit absolute indiffer-

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ence to the rites of religion. But, whilst it is not within the scope of the present investigation to seek an answer to such inquiries (although incidentally some light may be thrown upon the subject) the substantial fact remains that we boast of being a Christian nation, and that the Church—using the term in its widest sense—wields a powerful sceptre and exercises an enormous influence. And the preponderance of that influence is exerted in the cause of Imperialism.

Now, to those who stand outside the Church, and yet have some conception of the teachings of Christ—possibly a conception which is clearer for the precise reason that they *are* outside the Church, and are not therefore bound by official interpretation or priestly dogma—and who at the same time have some conception of the nature of Imperialism, with its claim to supremacy, its spirit of aggression, its stifling of independence, and its promotion of alien rule; the fact that war and racial predominance command the countenance, and even the blessing, of the Church, is one of the most melancholy, and, on the surface, most inexplicable of phenomena. The burden of the teaching of Christ was the brotherhood of man, irrespective of race; Imperialism is the subjection of man, based on the distinction of race. The office of religion is to ennoble life; war is the wanton destruction of life. The mission of the Church is to subdue men's passions, to promote amity, to preach peace; the lust of power means the unbridling of passion, the fostering of hatred, and the worship of brute force. When, therefore, we witness professing Christians proclaiming the doctrine

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of national supremacy, religion identifying itself with a crusade of slaughter, and the Church enthusiastically encouraging the vices of patriotism, we are face to face with what is apparently so gruesome an anomaly that it may well induce grave disquietude.

Obviously a Church which not only fails in its mission, but runs counter to it, instead of being an instrument for good is an instrument for evil—the community would be better without it. If it not only fails to ennoble and purify, but actually debases and makes gross, blank Agnosticism is infinitely preferable. For morality still remains ; and though this may not exercise its legitimate influence, men are at any rate in less danger of regarding immoral conduct as moral. But to an individual of religious convictions, such convictions are paramount to morality ; that is to say, if there is a conflict between religion and morality, religion carries the day ; he does not even realise that there is a conflict, for the reason that to him religion embodies the highest conceptions of morality. Thus, when the Church tells its faithful adherents that their country is engaged in a holy war—there is great virtue in the word “holy”—he feels perfectly satisfied. The patriotic bias generally induces men to regard as righteous any national enterprise in which their Government embarks ; but if they are left to the domain of pure ethics, they may be able to subdue this bias, and endeavour to look at the matter impartially and dispassionately. When, however, their religion is enlisted in the cause of aggression, and they are told by their accredited pastors that the Deity is on their side and that they have been

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chosen to fulfil his beneficent behests, they are only too happy to find their own predilections so comfortably confirmed. "Spiritual guides," therefore, when they are blind, inevitably lead their flocks into the mire; they are not simply useless but are pernicious.

The Church, whether or not it justifies in a spiritual sense its not uncommon designation of "militant," undoubtedly justifies it in a material sense. It has almost invariably defended the harsh and illogical arbitrament of the sword, and it has substantially contributed to the growth of the modern Imperialist spirit. If we look to its past history, we everywhere see that it has allied itself with physical force. It has approved of war, it has incited to war, it has waged war; and recent revelations show that its character is by no means changed. Byso-called civilised nations, probably more human lives have been sacrificed and more cruelty has been practised, either in the name or with the sanction of religion or through the direct or indirect influence of sacerdotalism, than from any other cause; and the bayonet has always commanded the blessing of the pulpit. With regard to our latest gigantic Imperial enterprise, Mr Chamberlain proclaimed with satisfaction that the ministers of religion, those "gentlemen whose profession inclined them to peace, to whatever denomination they belonged,"¹ were heartily on the side of the Government; and although he alluded only to the clerics of South Africa, this was possibly because he thought it superfluous to remind his hearers of the attitude of the clerics of England.

¹ *Speech at Birmingham, May 11, 1900.*

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In fact it seems that, so far from those who pose as the followers of the Prince of Peace being ardent opponents of war, they are actually more militant than the men who make no such profession ; and that, whilst happily some exceptions may be found, it is not to the Church but to those outside its pale that we must look for ethical guidance in times of national passion—it is they who are the strongest advocates of a pacific policy. Says Tolstoy, "War will exist so long as we not only profess, but tolerate without anger and indignation, that distortion of Christianity which is called the Christian Church, and according to which such things are admissible as a Christ-loving army, the consecration of guns and the recognition of a Christian and righteous war."¹ The dictum of an extremist, it will be replied ; the view of one who preaches the doctrine of non-resistance, who interprets literally the injunction to turn the other cheek when smitten on the one. Well, it is just possible the extremist is right, that the doctrine of "non-resistance," as it is termed (though it might, as has been pointed out,² be more accurately described as the doctrine of "moral resistance"), is taught in the Gospels, and that its injunctions were intended to mean what they apparently mean ; but, however this may be, the dictum itself is certainly not far from the truth, for this much is clear that until the Church ceases either to exist or to countenance war, war there will be. That a moral justification for drawing the sword may

¹ *Letters on War*. Maldon, The Free Age Press, 1900, p. 7.

² By Mr G. H. Perris, *Life and Teaching of Leo Tolstoy*. London : Grant Richards, 1904, p. 25.

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sometimes (though not often) be established, at any rate so far as one of the belligerent parties is concerned, it is not necessary to dispute ; but for the vast majority of wars—and this is the verdict of history—no such justification can possibly be found. Yet the Church has supported such wars ; it is not that she has occasionally defended some particular war, not that she has acted in accordance with pure ethics and merely ignored the letter of the possibly stricter mandates of Christianity ; it is that she has almost always ranged herself on the popular side, that she has invariably been the advocate of *force majeure* ; and that where, quite apart from any question of religious duty, ethics has pronounced condemnation and history has confirmed it, she has, nevertheless, given her approval and her benediction. In a word she has ever been a Church ~~militant in~~ ^{in the literal interpretation of the term} ; and whilst her Master proclaimed that his kingdom was not of this world, else would his servants fight, she has ever been ready to fight, or to exhort others to fight, for kingdom in this world.

Reflections such as the foregoing are not so likely to be aroused in times of peace, but they have been irresistibly provoked in the minds of many by the attitude of the Church towards Great Britain's recent Imperialist campaign in South Africa. In the subjugation of the Boers, the destruction of their independence, the annexation of their territory and the forcible expansion of the Empire, and in the "methods of barbarism" by which these results have been achieved, Ecclesiasticism has materially

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"aided and abetted"; and once more we have had promulgated the doctrine, *vox populi, vox Dei*. Patriotism has been preached as the "duty of the hour," as though (assuming it to be a duty) that duty was not sufficiently congenial to prevent any risk of its being neglected. In the English nation it has been discovered that there exists the modern Israel, called of God—that is to say, the Church's tribal Deity—for a special purpose. We were justified, said one priestly oracle, in invoking the blessing of the Most High on the English arms, and, to use the magnificent imagery of the Hebrew prophet, in speaking of the sword of England as 'bathed in heaven,' to carry out the work entrusted to the Anglo-Saxon race. A worthy Canon, to whom the Deity had apparently made a special revelation, informed us that a war which prevented ~~this country being broken~~ to pieces, and made it a great nation, was God's scourge. A still higher dignitary expressed the pious belief that by our praying and fighting we were spreading His precious gift of good government throughout the world. The war, we were informed by another confident prelate, was waged in the eternal interests of justice and truth, and was a blow at the tyrant, the oppressor, and the murderer. In picturesque language we were told by yet another reverend gentleman that we must strike for life and honour such a blow as should make all Boerdom reel, and that Oom Paul would "swim through seas of blood upon his belly, psalm-singing with every stomach-stroke, and not the least bit off colour all the while." Then the Nonconformist pulpit chimed in, amidst the loud

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applause of a delighted congregation, with the intimation that those who wished to stop the war were either imbeciles or traitors, imbeciles if they thought it could be stopped, traitors if they thought it ought to be stopped. From other inspired sources we learned that the Boers were a brutal and degraded race ; that they were utterly devoid of truthfulness, honour or honesty ; that they had a lower conception of the character of God and a lower interpretation of his word ; that we were fighting for higher ideals, which were breathed by the Holy Ghost ; and that from the bottom of our hearts we could invoke the blessing of Almighty God on our arms. Were attempts made to bring some of these bellicose clerics back to the teachings of Christ by sending them peace literature, the response was, for example, "I regard you as one of the greatest enemies of your country, and I shall ever pray that Almighty God will punish you both here and hereafter" ; or, "Your effusions brand you as a traitor to your country, and while they ought to be burned, you ought to be shot or imprisoned for life."¹ And finally—no not finally, for the sorry utterance was made at a comparatively early stage of the war, when we fatuously thought we had conquered—it was confidently proclaimed that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and that Jehovah had triumphed, his people were free.

Quotations might be multiplied *ad nauseam*, but sufficient indication has been given of the attitude and spirit of the "ambassadors of Christ" at a period when the nation was demoniacally possessed,

¹ Letters to Mr W. T. Stead.

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and when all the forces of evil were in the ascendancy. There were honourable and noteworthy exceptions ; there were not wanting men who resisted the popular passion, who fought against it—in some cases amidst contumely and scorn and at great personal sacrifice—and who even, with diminishing following or compulsory resignation of their pulpits, effected enough good to demonstrate what a potent instrument for righteousness the Church might have proved if it had only been true to its profession. But the vast majority of those whose sacred duty it is to preach peace on earth and good-will to man, were either openly and enthusiastically ranging themselves on the side of war on earth and ill-will to man, or else preserving that pitiful silence which gave consent.

The phenomenon might have been less striking, though sufficiently painful, if it had been confined to the clergy of the Established Church. For it is one of the incongruities of such an organisation that its officials owe a divided allegiance. A monopolist Church, a Church buttressed by the State, possessing special privileges and supported by State revenues, is impelled to approve a State war and to countenance State interposition in the interests of monopoly and privilege ; and if the State embarks in war—well, it is the business of such a Church to demonstrate that the war is holy. At any rate, judging from its past history, it is vain to look to the Establishment to stem the tide of popular passion, or to range itself on the side of the victims of oppression. Through all the long centuries it has been a persecuting body, guilty of the most flagrant cruelty when it had the power, and invariably

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using its influence in the cause of despotism ; in every crisis in the growth of English liberties, to quote Mr Morley (and he might have added, in the foreign struggle for freedom from English domination), the one when its own purse and privilege were threatened alone excepted, it has been the ally of tyranny, the organ of social oppression, and the champion of intellectual bondage.¹ These facts alone pronounce the most scathing condemnation, from the religious point of view, of the unnatural union between Church and State ; and had the clerical stimulus to aggressive Imperialism been confined to the episcopal pulpits, it would have been a striking object lesson which might have considerably accelerated the advent of disestablishment. But the opportunity was lost ; the Non-conformist pulpits were scarcely less belligerent, the doctrine of racial supremacy was not less confidently proclaimed ; and the very men who had identified themselves with the cause of domestic liberty became supporters of the cause of alien coercion ; the very men who gloried in their own independence, and in their country's independence, joined in depriving other men and another country of an independence not less highly prized. A furious wave of patriotism burst over the land—as it always does in time of war—and submerged the Church and conventicle alike.

But it may be urged—it has been urged—that the clergy are as much entitled to their opinions

¹ *The Struggle for National Education.* London : Chapman & Hall, 1873, p. 3.

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as the laity; that they merely shared the common belief as to the war being righteous; that they conscientiously held that belief; and that they cannot, therefore, be censured even if the belief were erroneous. Such a contention, however, not only fails to recognise that the moral justification for an opinion depends upon how it is arrived at, but ignores the peculiar responsibility which attaches to the clergy. The tendency for most men is to jump to conclusions, especially if they are conclusions which are palatable; it avails them little to say that they are conscientious if they have shirked the labour of investigation, or have allowed themselves to be swayed by prejudice. And whilst we may properly condemn the ordinary man for the looseness and partiality with which he forms his opinions, the condemnation must fall far more heavily upon public teachers who exhibit similar characteristics, more especially when they claim to be ethical teachers and the opinions in question relate to questions of conduct. Ministers of the Gospel have a special obligation imposed upon them. They have chosen of their own free will to become the exponents of the Christian religion, to make it their endeavour to follow the teachings of Christ, to labour to induce other men to obey the injunctions of Christ. They have taken upon themselves the onerous duty of seeking to lead their fellows into higher channels; they claim to be ethical specialists who devote themselves to the study of conduct. If, therefore, they are simply to be judged by the same standard as the average individual, who does not profess to be "converted," still

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less to aim at converting others, and who may even repudiate Christianity altogether, their *raison d'être* disappears. We do not exonerate a doctor for unskilful treatment because the patient could not have done better himself; we do not acquit a lawyer of negligence because his client is a fool. And if the clergy, notwithstanding their "saintly office"—and none appear to attach more importance to it than they themselves do—are to appeal merely to the criterion which the "unregenerate" man recognises, then we may well ask for what object the pulpit exists. It is perfectly true that in matters of conduct every one ought to be a law unto himself, that the responsibility is imposed upon all of honestly and carefully arriving at convictions and of acting in accordance with them. As a matter of fact, however, very few make that scrupulous analysis of belief and conduct which they should make; impulse and inclination lead men astray; but it is precisely at a time when a whole nation is acting on impulse and in accordance with inclination that its public teachers should step in to admonish and rebuke. No doubt the vast majority of those who supported the South African War, and of those who are imbued with the spirit of Imperialism, thought the war was righteous and believe that it is a grand thing to extend British supremacy; and the gravamen of the charge against the clergy is, not that they hypocritically profess the popular belief, but that they, in fact, share such belief; that whenever the nation embarks on an immoral or disastrous enterprise—and nothing can be more immoral or disastrous than war—they are always able to

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discover a justification for such enterprise because it is national.

War as a rule stands condemned by ethics, and *a fortiori* by Christianity ; but whilst that condemnation finds pronouncement in the pulpit as an abstract proposition in times of peace, let a responsible Government but once threaten or engage in hostilities, and it will be supported by the Church. The general populace is easily persuaded that when their country quarrels with another, their country is right ; there is a natural bias in that direction, and this bias is almost always stimulated by falsehood and distortion of facts, by unwarranted deductions from premises whether true or false, by blinding the eyes to the drastic nature of a remedy which is generally worse than the disease (where the latter exists), by appeals to passion and prejudice, and by the fostering of the spirit of hatred and uncharitableness. And no more formidable indictment can be brought against the clergy than to say that they, too, exemplify these common vices, frequently in an intensified form ; and, above all, that they publicly encourage them and give to them the sanction of religion and the impress of divine authority. They of all men ought to make it their one strenuous effort to free themselves from bias, to examine into facts and give credence to nothing calculated to provoke war which is not irrefutably established, to make their deductions rationally and dispassionately, to exhibit a due sense of proportion, to realise that a drastic remedy can never be justified save for the most desperate disease, to discountenance appeals to passion and prejudice, and to sternly

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rebuke the spirit of hatred and uncharitableness. And it is because the bulk of them have once again failed in this obvious duty, and sunk to the level of the impetuous and unreflecting populace whom their special mission is to aim at uplifting, that they have demonstrated anew what a miserable failure is the so-called Christian Church, or rather what a sinister success it achieves in the promotion of anti-Christian sentiments. Insincere or hypocritical they were not ; would that it were left to insincerity and hypocrisy to foster and support an aggressive war, for mankind is fortunately not so largely permeated with these vices that they can be considered dominant characteristics. The priests of the Inquisition, for aught we know, were honest in their profession that bodily torture was instrumental in saving souls ; and more cruelty has been perpetrated by fanaticism than by deliberate malice. Indeed, the recognition of a debased standard of morality is calculated to result in far greater evil than the failure rigidly to adhere to an exalted standard.

“ His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.”

To be falsely true—to what demoralisation does it not lead ! To be falsely true to the belief that the universal Father has appointed some of his children to shoot down others of his children, and authorises one imperfect fallible human being to act as an avenging scourge towards another imperfect fallible human being ; to be falsely true to the belief that racial supremacy and despotic rule are noble things to strive for, and that peace, prosperity, and happi-

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ness are promoted by war, devastation, and misery ; to be falsely true to the belief that our little systems are so vastly superior to other little systems as to make it righteous and Christian to extend ours by destroying those ; to be falsely true to the belief that the liberty, independence, and autonomy, which we so highly prize, and an attack upon which we should resent to the death, can be legitimately stamped out when attaching to another race, whose men, women and children will die ere they submit ; to be falsely true to the belief that it is wrong for a foreigner to do what it is right for an Englishman to do, and that vice is condoned if it is thought that virtue will result ; to be falsely true to the belief that the religion of love and the gospel of brotherhood marks with its approval the fulminations of hatred and a fratricidal crusade, and that the life and death of the "meek and lowly one," who suffered martyrdom for humanity, can be invoked in defence of a spirit of arrogance and vainglory and of the martyrdom of others ; to be falsely true to the belief that ethics approves of immorality doing its worst in the name of morality, and that Christianity countenances everything that is un-Christlike—this it is which drags us down to the lowest depths of ignominy, and almost suggests whether it were not better that we had no moral faculty whatsoever. To man is given the power to distinguish between right and wrong ; at his best he struggles nobly, if intermittently and painfully, to attain to high ideals ; at his worst he forsakes all ideals, and does what he knows to be wrong ; but he never presents a more sorry spectacle than when, through the

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eclipse of reason by passion or through the perversion of judgment by prejudice, he fails to distinguish between right and wrong, and by the creation of a false ideal actually deludes himself into the belief that wrong is right.

THE CHURCH'S APOLOGIA

Of course, however, the clergy would vehemently, and no doubt indignantly, repudiate any suggestion of apostasy. They would scout the idea that they had acted inconsistently with their religious profession, or had mistaken wrong for right; they would deny that their opinions had been hastily formed without impartial investigation, or that their judgment had been perverted by prejudice or passion; and they would claim that they had been guided alike by reason, religion, and morals. And in justification of this they would assert, not merely that they believe Imperialism makes for the welfare of humanity, but that they have solid grounds for their belief; not merely that they consider a particular war to be righteous, but that it can be demonstrated to be righteous.

We must, therefore, bring this matter to the test of actual facts and of dry logic. Let it be investigated in the light of recent events and of the modern Imperialist spirit; for it is such events, and the evidence they afford of the growth of such spirit, which has prompted to this examination; and although the attitude of Ecclesiasticism in the past has been the same as it is to-day, the investigation can reasonably be limited—and even then it is tolerably

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wide—to the justification it is sought to establish for the support given to the South African Imperial diplomacy and the South African Imperial war.

The Christian Church has once again been on its trial ; it has joined in painting the map red ; it has given its countenance to the expansion of the Empire by means of the destruction of two free Republics ; and it is entitled to be heard in its own defence. Further, it can fairly demand that it shall be heard at its best ; that it shall not be judged merely by detached utterances or rhetorical flourishes, such as have already been quoted ; but that the most sober, dispassionate and exegetical apologia that can be found should be chosen for examination.

These various requirements seem to be most nearly met if the published volume of sermons by the Rev. Bernard Snell, M.A., B.Sc.¹ be taken as embodying the case for the War and for Imperialism from the point of view of the Christian Church. Of course it may be argued that each pulpit speaks only for itself, and that it is open to others to disown the utterances or to regard them as inadequate. The contention, however, is, at any rate broadly speaking, not admissible ; for when a man of position speaks from a common platform and in the exposition of a common cause, others who occupy the same platform and advocate the same cause are more or less involved ; and whilst mere community of interest and purpose does not bind all to every argument or opinion formulated by each, it can at least be assumed that accord exists as to leading principles laid down.

¹ *Sermons on the Boer War.* By the Rev. Bernard Snell. London: James Clark and Co. 1902.

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In any case, all that the critic can do, beyond referring to the prevailing general sentiment and tone, is to select for investigation the best detailed exposition he can find ; and this particular one commends itself for a variety of reasons. In the first place, the volume consists of not less than five sermons, preached at intervals before and during the war, all specially devoted to the particular subject ; and it is in this respect probably unique. In the second place, the fact that the sermons were collected and published indicates that they represent mature convictions and are intended to appeal, not merely to a particular congregation, but to the public at large. In the third place, they emanated from a Nonconformist pulpit, and are therefore the pronouncements, not of a State but of a free cleric ; an examination of the case in the light of Christianity, not as "by law established" or as presented by Convocation, but as subject to no such restraint, and as interpreted by the individual conscience. In the fourth place, their author is a politician of advanced views who has laboured strenuously in the cause of progress, and cannot therefore be said to have any traditional sympathy with or predilection for a Conservative government. In the fifth place, he is a man of scholarly attainments, of high reputation, and of widespread influence. And lastly, he speaks with obvious sincerity and earnestness, and with certainly a minimum of that inflammatory rhetoric which has characterised some pulpit utterances and gained for them the applause of the congregations. It is extremely doubtful, therefore, whether any selection could be made which would do, even approximately,

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the same amount of justice to the Church ; and it may not unfairly be suggested that if this apologia does not disclose an unanswerable case for the war from the Christian standpoint, such a case cannot be established.

The volume has a curious little preface, which leads at the outset to the suspicion that the author's customary ratiocinative power will not be strongly in evidence. He tells us it has seemed to him expedient that those who have lost relatives and friends should have the advantage of knowing that their countrymen who occupy pulpits are not without a sense of sympathy with them in their loss, and that they have spoken out their minds frankly to their congregations in the assurance that those lives have not been laid down in vain nor for an unrighteous cause. There seems a twofold suggestion in this statement, namely, that sympathy with the bereaved can be entertained either only or more fully by those who share the opinions of the preacher with regard to the war, and that there is some intimate connection between the duty of a soldier and the righteousness of the cause for which he is called upon to fight. The author would, probably, not be prepared to commit himself to these propositions in express terms ; but unless he is, his observation is pointless. He knows full well that sympathy with the bereaved was common to practically all men ; and it might not unreasonably have occurred to him that that sympathy would be more intense on the part of those who regarded the war as unnecessary and unrighteous, and who therefore felt that the lives need not have

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been laid down, than on the part of those who felt that the sacrifice was being made for a great end. And he also knows full well that the soldier, having once enlisted, has no choice but to obey orders, and would not be allowed to judge, even if he had the means of judging, as to the righteousness of the cause (whether or not he is justified in thus unconditionally surrendering the right of private judgment is, of course, another question), and that the responsibility for war rests upon those who make and support it. One cannot suppose that this Christian minister had no, or less, sympathy with the Boer widows and orphans, or that because he presumably thought the Boer cause an unrighteous one he had nothing but blame for the men who were fighting for their independence; and there is no doubt he would repudiate this not altogether unnatural inference from his observations. The fact seems to be that these very opening remarks indicate bias, foster bias, and appeal to bias; and by a *suggestio falsi*, of which the author is evidently quite unconscious, tend to obscure the real issue and to prejudice the question to be determined.

As we proceed with the sermons bias becomes more manifest, and takes the distinct form of racial prejudice and racial pride, colouring the argument and investing it with a specious sophistry. Let a few illustrations be cited:

“I am afraid that I have too little sympathy with those anæmic people whose one political axiom appears to be that whatever is British is wrong, to do them justice in characterising their attitude.”

“Do let us have a little more self-respect and respect for

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our so dearly beloved country than to fling around cheap accusations of evil intent. I believe in my fellow-countrymen, and am jealous of the good name of my people."

"I need no convincing that in the maintenance of our Empire are involved the interests of peace, justice and humanity to hundreds of millions of human beings."

"It is true that Israel had a mission. So has England a mission."

"All the vagabonds of the world are against us—all the extremists, the absolutists no less than the revolutionaries."

"After all, it matters less to us what the outside world says, seeing that our own family is staunch. Our own people understand. By instinct they felt that we were right, and they stood beside us in our need."

Now what is all this but throwing dust in the eyes of the people ; patriotic dust which has got into the preacher's eyes, and with which he and his congregation alike no doubt enjoyed being partially blinded ? It is tolerably safe to say he never met the anæmics to whom he refers, and if he did they are certainly entitled to justice—especially as to assert that whatever is British is wrong is, whilst not more stupid and arrogant, less mischievous than to assert that whatever is British is right. Presumably the individuals he had in his mind were not the mythical personages to whom he refers, but the men who thought that their country was more or less responsible for the war ; in which case he would have to include such men as the Bishop of Hereford, Dr Clifford, Mr Herbert Spencer, Mr Frederic Harrison, and many other "anæmics" of eminence who could be named. Respect for one's country, and jealousy for its good name, are no doubt admirable qualities ; and it so happens they are shared in even by wicked

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pro-Boers, and partly impelled them to their ineffectual efforts to prevent what they regarded as a national crime ; but such qualities are strangely perverted if they induce the belief that one's own nation cannot possibly commit a crime. As to the maintenance of our Empire in the interests of peace, justice and humanity, this raises the vast question which is elsewhere discussed,¹ as to whether alien rule is consistent with such interests ; and the only observation which need here be made is that the substantial issue was whether the Empire should be forcibly extended, and that by means of a war which seemed to some to involve injustice and not a little inhumanity. The comparison of England to Israel with its "mission" was, of course, inevitable in any sermon in defence of Imperialism ; but to those who assert a divine mandate for their actions the short reply is a challenge to establish a dictum which strikes at the very root of morality by shifting responsibility on to a super-mundane Power. To intimate that all the vagabonds of the world were against us, including extremists and absolutists, seems rather unkind to our friend the Sultan of Turkey ; but whilst the observation is calculated to foster prejudice, there is a great deal of truth in it, seeing that a great part of the civilised world (which unfortunately contains some vagabonds) was against us, with the exception of men of our own race. Opinions may differ as to whether or not this matters, but the naïve statement that our own people "by instinct felt we were right" introduces a kind of canine standard of morality which clearly

¹ See Articles I. and V.

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removes the question from the region of conventional ethics.

Of course, this strong patriotic bias produces its characteristic and natural results when the facts come to be dealt with. If we start, whether consciously or unconsciously, with a conviction that we are in the right, the inevitable tendency is to overlook what would tell against us, and to discover what would tell in our favour. Throughout these sermons there is not the slightest attempt to regard the matter from the Boer point of view; we get no hint of their case beyond a casual reference, such as that it was said by some the Boers were but defending their homes, and that they were struggling for independence ("fatally wrecked by their own stupidity"!); although allusions to them as "a people essentially pacific and religious," and as doubtless having "fine qualities" and with "better stuff than the wasp's sting in their character," are calculated to suggest that after all they might have had a case. On the other hand, no difficulty is experienced in conscientiously finding premises for the conclusion that our action was justified, even down to the final stage of annexation and the destruction of independence. By failing to ascertain facts and giving credence to fictions, the most honest investigator will be led astray.

The contentions—if the attempt to weed them out and summarise them has been successful—resolve themselves into these: that England was fighting (1) to relieve her sons from grave oppression, (2) in self-defence, and (3) to prevent slavery. Of course, if these contentions were valid, an unanswer-

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able plea for the war, at any rate up to the point of ensuring the desired results, would be established ; but there is scarcely a vestige of evidence called in support of them, and the absence of any reference to the rebutting evidence seems to indicate that our author simply shared the popular belief, without making full independent research to ascertain whether it was well founded or was not born and fostered of ignorance, pride, and passion.

Let us examine the contentions in detail.

With regard to oppression, we are told that the position of our kinsmen was intolerable, that no Englishman can permanently suffer the treatment meted out to pariahs, that our children were the prey of the stranger, that it is the duty of our Empire to protect its subjects, that we determined to end the wrongs of the Outlanders, and that war in destruction of oppression is approved by the universal conscience. Why the position was intolerable, who were the pariahs, in what the prey consisted, and what were the wrongs of the Outlanders, are, however, as difficult to discover as Lord Milner's historic "helots." Not a single fact is adduced in support of these grave allegations, not a suggestion offered that any answer to them had ever been made. No doubt it would be said that the grievances of the Outlanders were notorious, but there is a blissful unconsciousness of any obligation to ascertain whether such alleged grievances were fictitious or not, and whether, if real, they were of so terrible a nature as to justify a prolonged war and the ultimate destruction of two Republics. Probably no one now believes in Lord Milner's bogie

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"helots," or in Mr Snell's bogie "pariahs"; but even at the time there was ample evidence, for those who chose to investigate impartially, to have effectually destroyed these bogies. Let a few facts be quoted; as, for example; that Captain March Phillips, who lived and worked among the Outlanders (many of whom Mr Snell himself describes in terms of scathing contempt and condemnation), and who fought with the British, has intimated the grievances were a most useful invention which had a hand in the making of many fortunes, and the London newspapers were read with roars of laughter to find out what these precious grievances were;¹ that Mr E. B. Rose, formerly president of the Witwatersrand Mine Employés' and Mechanics' Union, has declared that after twelve years' residence in the Transvaal he

¹ *With Rimington* (London: Edward Arnold, 1902), pp. 105-6. It may not be uninteresting to quote in full Captain Phillips' observations on the subject: "As for the Uitlanders and their grievances, I would not ride a yard or fire a shot to right all the grievances that were ever invented. The mass of the Uitlanders (*i.e.* the miners and working men of the Rand) had no grievances. I know what I am talking about, for I have lived and worked among them. I have seen English newspapers passed from one to another, and roars of laughter raised by the *Times*' telegrams about these precious grievances. We used to read the London papers to find out *what our grievances were*; and very frequently they would be due to causes of which we had never even heard. I never met one miner or working man who would have walked a mile to pick the vote up off the road, and I have known and talked with scores and hundreds. And no man who knows the Rand will deny the truth of what I tell you. No; but the Uitlanders the world has heard of were not these, but the Stock Exchange operators, manipulators of the money market, company floaters, and gamblers generally, a large percentage of them Jews. They voiced Johannesburg, had the Press in their hands, worked the wires and controlled and arranged what sort of information should reach England. As for the grievances, they were a most useful invention, and have had a hand in the making of many fortunes. It was by these that a feeling of in-

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returned to England without a grievance ;¹ that the testimony of the miners (who formed the bulk of the "Outlanders") shows that they had no complaint against the Boer Government, and were never so well off in their lives ; that when the celebrated petition to the late Queen (the methods of obtaining signatures to which have long since been disclosed) was sent in, a counter-petition with a larger number (23,000) of signatures of Outlanders of various nationalities, including British, was addressed to the Government of the Republic, expressing perfect satisfaction with that Government and its administration ; that although the Outlanders were of all nationalities, not a single Government other than the British, even made diplomatic representation with regard to the alleged grievances ; and that several thousand Outlanders had such a curious sense of their wrongs that they actually fought for the Boers.

security was introduced into the market, which would otherwise have remained always steady ; it was by these that the necessary periodic slump was brought about. When the proper time came, "grievances," such as would arrest England's attention and catch the ear of the people were *deliberately invented* ; stories, again, were deliberately invented of the excitement, panic, and incipient revolution of Johannesburg, and by these means was introduced that feeling of insecurity I have spoken of, which was necessary to lower prices."

¹ Mr Rose, after a detailed *expost*, writes : "I could take every one of the numerous grievances which we Uitlanders were alleged to be suffering under, and could show in much the same way how hollow were the pretences, how flimsy were the grievances which had any basis at all in fact, and how in the main these so-called grievances were simply part and parcel of the crusade of calumny upon the Boers, having for its object eventual British intervention and destruction of Boer independence, an object which has now only too successfully been accomplished."—*The Truth about the Transvaal*. (Footnote, p. 73), p. 154.

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It has often been said that taxation was oppressive, but we have never been told what distinction in this respect was made between Boer and Outlander ; and, as an actual fact, the taxation compared most favourably as regards amount with any other mining State, whilst the incidence was sound, since the mine-owners paid more for the simple reason that they were the more wealthy and were drawing a large revenue from the State. Ah ! but it was taxation without representation. Even so, where is the justification to be found for rushing a Government into granting representation to aliens who voluntarily take up their residence for their own purposes, and simply for what they can get out of the country, without otherwise exhibiting the slightest interest in its welfare ; and especially when they are so numerous that to do so might (as Mr Chamberlain pointed out¹) result in the extinction of that Government ? And, above all, does it constitute a legitimate grievance that the franchise is refused to men who are unwilling to renounce their foreign allegiance or to assume the responsibilities of citizenship ?

“ If the Boers,” we are told, “ had given a solitary sign that they would treat our settlers as their kindred are treated at the Cape, peace would have been certain, for no Minister of the Queen could have persuaded his colleagues to decree war.” Well, their kindred at the Cape have been treated as rebels, that is to say, as men who were subject to the Government under which they lived ; it was not permitted to them to plead a divided allegiance ; and amongst other penalties they have suffered

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons, February 13, 1896.*

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disfranchisement—with the result that the hero of the Raid is now Prime Minister of Cape Colony. But was ever a more fatal doctrine preached? Peace would have been *certain* if the particular treatment accorded to the Cape Dutch had been accorded to the Transvaal English; so that the case for war is made to rest on the bare circumstance that a foreign nation did not choose to adopt our particular *régime*.¹ As a matter of fact, in England no alien can claim the franchise as of right; he can apply for it after five years' residence, but the Secretary of State has an absolute discretion as to granting or withholding it, without assigning any reason.² The point, however, is not whether the Boer Government compared unfavourably or favourably with ours—as to which something more hereafter³—but that the simple existence of a difference is seriously regarded as a justification for the destruction of that Government. Moreover, the fact that we had distinctly agreed by Convention to abandon all claim to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal is absolutely ignored—obligations undertaken by us evidently do not count—and even had no such agreement been made, the exponent of this remarkable doctrine may be challenged to cite any principle of international law by which one nation is entitled to dictate to another as regards its franchise or its fiscal policy. Opinions may differ as to the wisdom or expediency of some of the

¹ With some apparent inconsistency, however, it is elsewhere stated that but for the invasion of Natal, English opinion would never have tolerated the war.

² See *Naturalisation Act*, 1870, sec. 7.

³ See footnote, page 206.

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Transvaal laws (as they do with regard to British laws), but the onus is upon those who assert "intolerable oppression" to prove, both that oppression existed, and that it was so intolerable as to justify recourse to arms; and had this preliminary duty only been realised and its performance attempted, it is more than doubtful whether this particular defence of the war would ever have been put forward.

The next contention elicited is that we were fighting in self-defence—"war became a necessity, imposed by the inexorable law of self-preservation." Doubtless there is no gainsaying this law, nor are there many who will challenge the proposition (somewhat elaborately urged) that defence is a duty; and if it could only be shown that the case came within this law and that the duty had arisen, there would be nothing more to be said on the subject. The marvel, however, is that it is not seen what a two-edged weapon is being brandished, and that the very justification of the Boers consisted in the fact that they foresaw all too clearly they were threatened with the deprivation of their liberty, the loss of their territory, and the destruction of their independence. To any one who could seriously maintain that our own action was traceable to the inexorable law of self-preservation, it should surely have been additionally evident that the very doctrine enunciated can never be more operative than when submission involves national extinction; and further, that, when a war is originally defensive, it can be converted into an aggressive one.

Of course the crucial question that is here raised

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is as to the origin of the war ; and this is calmly ascribed to the Boer ultimatum. It is true there is some indication of knowledge that this was not the first act of the grim drama ; there is a passing reference to the Raid as a "deplorable mistake" and an "unprincipled procedure" (one wonders if this description would have been found adequate had the position been reversed), and there is even an admission of failure to appreciate some of the steps of the controversy ; but we are told that there is no need to unravel the tangled skein, for the Boers cut through all controversy by their utterly unexpected ultimatum and immediate invasion of our Colony. This, it is evidently considered, cleaned the slate ; all previous records are sponged out, and there is not the slightest apprehension that the vital issue is whether these records did not indubitably point to war, and whether the Boers did not and were not obliged to issue their ultimatum in pursuance of the inexorable law of self-preservation and in the performance of the sacred duty of self-defence. There seems, however, to have crept in some lingering doubt as to whether the case did not require an additional buttress ; and we are informed that the contest was precipitated by the imprudent dreaming of our opponents that they might drive us from the land, and that their aspiration for years had been to extrude us from South Africa and secure the ascendancy of the Dutch race.¹ Not a scrap of

¹ Mr Snell does not favour the term "conspiracy," so that theory need not be combated ; but any reader who still doubts the truth of Mr Bryce's statement that the much-advertised Dutch conspiracy to expel British power from South Africa was a baseless fable is recommended to read Captain March Phillips' *With Rimington*, chap. xvi.

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evidence is called in support of these "cheap accusations of evil intent," no doubt for the very adequate reason that evidence as to dreams and aspirations is not very readily obtainable, and if obtained is not of much value, seeing that phenomena of this description have not yet been penalised. As to the ultimatum itself, we are told that it was the last insult from a little Republic which owed its existence to us; but we get no clue to what were the previous insults, or why the Republic should be chastised by a big State for being "little"; and apparently the circumstance that it had an independent existence before it was annexed by us in 1877 was unknown or forgotten.

It is indeed upon the ultimatum that the whole case is made to hang; the basis of this theory of self-defence is that the Boers struck the first blow; they had, it is stated, prepared themselves for the eventuality, they had accumulated tremendous war-material for this one only purpose, and when they were conscious of a magnificent military strength they chose the moment and "raided" our Colonies. Of the fact that they had as much right as any other nation to accumulate war material; that after the Jameson Raid, and more especially after the Report of the English House of Commons and the public whitewashing of Mr Rhodes by the Colonial Secretary, they were in doing so only acting as any prudent nation would do, in recognition of the inexorable law of self-preservation; that the moment they chose was not selected until they had for months made bootless efforts to preserve peace, by offering concessions we had not a vestige of right to demand,

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and far beyond anything short of the greatest anxiety to prevent hostilities would have prompted, only to be met by threats, and eventually by a despatch withdrawing all proposals (accurately described by a Tory newspaper as the English ultimatum—to an actual “ultimatum,” Sir Conan Doyle intimates, “our Government was cautiously and patiently leading up,”¹) by the concentration of troops on their frontier, the shipment of strong reinforcements from India, the mobilisation of the reserves, the organisation of an army corps, and other warlike preparations—of all these things we get not the slightest hint. Dr Karl Blind (who will scarcely be regarded as one of the “vagabonds” or “extremists,” especially as he has always been friendly to England) has tersely and forcibly put the case when he says:

“You drive a man, forsooth, into a corner; you hold your fist before his face; you threaten him by saying that the sand of the hour-glass is running out, and that, unless he makes haste to kneel down, you will use other measures against him; you hold your sword and gun ready to attack him, and then, when he strikes a blow, *he* is, of course, the guilty party!”²

What the actual attitude of the English Government was has since been revealed to us by Lord Lansdowne, when he stated³ that in June 1899 (four months before the Boer ultimatum) Lord Wolseley wished to mobilise an army corps, and suggested the occupation of Delagoa Bay; that he pressed those measures upon the Government with an expression of his desire that the operations might

¹ *The Great Boer War*. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1902, p. 78.

² *North American Review*, December 1899, p. 765.

³ *Speech in the House of Lords*, March 15, 1901.

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begin as soon as possible, in order that they might get the war over before November; but that, although the idea of forcing the pace in such a manner as to complete the subjugation of the two Republics (poor Orange Free State—what had it done?) by then did not commend itself to the Government, let it not be supposed that all this time they were sitting with their hands folded; they did not contemptuously brush on one side the advice given to them by their recognised military advisers; their policy was a policy of peace and not of provocation; they earnestly desired to have the country with them, and believed the country was not ready for war in the months of June and July 1899, and they therefore contented themselves with taking those measures they were advised were sufficient to ensure the safety of the Colonies in the meanwhile. Of course, the preacher is not to blame that, speaking as he did prior to this revelation, he failed to discover the actual mind of the Government or their military advisers; but it might have occurred to him that the war was the direct outcome of our arrogant demands and bellicose diplomacy. One Government organ, haunted long afterwards by the nightmare that we were threatened with the loss of South Africa, has intimated that had a Liberal Ministry been in power "the war would not have been begun at all" (there is the gracious qualification, "or it would have been ended with a worse Majuba")¹; and the admission seems a somewhat tardy recognition of the fact that the responsibility for hostilities lay with Great Britain.

¹ *The Standard*, March 18, 1903.

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Perhaps, however, it is the persistent demand of the Boers for arbitration which makes us marvel most at the evolution from the miasma of hypothetical dreams and aspirations of this theory that "our position in South Africa was assailed." Arbitration is not the creed of conspirators; and in continuously (almost piteously), from the time of the Bloemfontein Conference to the ultimatum, urging this mode of settling all differences, the Boers, had they desired to extrude us from South Africa, or to secure the ascendancy of the Dutch race, could not have taken any course more fatal to that object. Yet throughout these sermons, the one solitary indication that their author was aware of this absolute answer to his indictment is the bland (and in this connection, irrelevant) statement to the effect that he was unable to see "arbitration was more admissible than it was when Abraham Lincoln declared that he could not admit the existence of the Union to be a subject for arbitration"—whilst the men who from the first vainly looked to us to act in the spirit of the Convention we had recently signed at the Hague are calmly told that "if they had been bent on peace, they might easily have had it." And this taunt (which sounds very much like adding insult to injury) emanates from one who quotes with approval the statement that the great triumph of civilisation has been the substitution of judicial determination for the cold, cruel, crude arbitrament of war, and who actually concludes one of the sermons with the following apt appreciation of Christianity:—

"Do not be judge, advocate, jury and executioner in one. Refer it to impartial equity to decide. Be patient

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under injury. Rather suffer wrong than do wrong. That is the spirit of Christ's teaching and of Christ's life."

The remaining contention is that we were fighting to prevent slavery ; and the first observation to be made as to this is that of all the demands we presented to the Transvaal Government not one of them had reference to an amelioration of the condition of the natives. The plea is a belated one, put forward by many after hostilities had commenced, and eagerly seized upon by devout individuals who perhaps felt a little shaky as to the other pleas ; but even if it had been based upon fact it would have been invalid as a justification for a war brought about by totally different causes. Still, to rescue the natives from tyranny is a noble thing ; and if the war, however it originated, had been attended with that result, it would at least have been a mitigating feature. But even this consolation is denied us ; the allegation no more squares with the facts than do those pleas already examined.

We are told that the conflict was one between two opposing ideals, the English ideal which includes no slavery, as opposed to the Boer ideal which is for racial supremacy—that they are for privilege and we are for equality. This, in part, is a peculiar inversion of the truth, for racial supremacy is the one thing for which we fought. It was laid down as indisputable that we must be the dominant Power in South Africa ; this was the one reason assigned for annexation ; and the establishment of British rule was throughout represented as the noblest of objects.¹

¹ Mr Snell somewhat curiously seems to think that the destruction of independence does not involve racial supremacy, and propounds a theory of " racial equality in consonance with the recognised traditions

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And as for "equality" as opposed to "privilege," when and where, it may be asked, have we treated native races as equals, and does not privilege in various forms far more largely prevail in England than it ever did in the Transvaal? ¹ For a charming paradox, however, it would be difficult to surpass the statement that the Boers "have not yet learnt that they who prize their own independence should prize that of others"; and it is marvellous that there should be no perception of the rich irony of such a statement, as made in defence of a war which we were determined should be arrested on no terms short of the destruction of independence. That was at length achieved, and the substantial question which arises, in connection with the present contention, is — will the natives as the result be better off?

The allegations apparently amount to this, that the Kaffirs were treated as slaves by the Boers, but by the British will be treated as equals; the former, we are told, seem to be as convinced as were the Confederates that slavery is an institution ordained of God, and but for England South Africa would lapse of our Colonies," whilst at the same time he is resolute against the concession of independence. But, as Mr Chamberlain has told us, our Colonies are "absolutely independent States; there is nothing to prevent their separating from us to-morrow; we could not, we would not, attempt to hold them by force; it is a voluntary bond." (*Speech at Rochester*, July 26, 1904). If then the Transvaal is to be placed on the same basis as Canada and Australia, the *reductio ad absurdum* is reached that we spent 250 millions in depriving it of an independence which we are prepared to regrant for the asking. Of course we have no intention of doing anything of the kind; the bond is not voluntary but compulsory, and "racial equality" is a myth: we fought for racial supremacy and we mean to maintain it.

¹ See footnote, page 206.

into semi-barbarism. It is a patriotic picture, which many artists have sketched, and which never fails to command that popular admiration accorded to Mr Chamberlain's highly lurid daub, when, with a big splash, he portrayed the natives of the Transvaal as having been subject to treatment which was disgraceful, brutal, and unworthy of a civilised Power.¹ And now that the vile accusation has done its deadly work, and we are called upon to give practical indication of our own regard for the Kaffirs, we have had the following remarkable recantation :—

“There is one thing I am bound to say in justice to our late opponents. I was led, as probably the majority of this House were, by statements which were made, to believe that the treatment of the native by the Boer was very bad ; and in that belief we expressed a hope that when the war came to an end we should be able to improve it. Now the war itself is evidence that this charge against the Boer was exaggerated. I freely make that admission. If it had not been exaggerated it is impossible to believe that the Boers could, as I know they did in hundreds and thousands of cases, leave their wives and children and property to the care of the few natives they had previously on their farms. Very few outrages took place ; and undoubtedly in many cases the natives gave assistance to the Boers during the war, just as in many other cases they gave assistance to us. And therefore, although the conception of the native by the Boer is something totally different to the conception which has been put before the House in the course of the present debate, and which represents, no doubt, the British idea of the relations between the races, yet of real brutality, violent misconduct, or ill-treatment, I think that, in the majority of cases at any rate, they must be absolved. The Boers do repudiate entirely any idea of equality ; they regard the native as little better than an animal, and certainly in no

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons, October 19, 1899.*

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case as deserving different treatment from that which we would give to a child. They do not hesitate to apply corporal punishment for very slight offences; and in other respects they act in a way which would undoubtedly be reprobated in a British subject. But it remains that they seem somehow or other to have understood the native character; they have not been regarded on the whole as hard or severe masters by the natives, and no great amount of ill-feeling has ever sprung up between the two.”¹

So that the Boer treatment of the native was not after all disgraceful, brutal, and unworthy of a civilised Power, as Mr Chamberlain and the majority of people were led to believe (alas! how many things were they “led to believe” which were not true), and this slander having served its purpose disappears. Still, the Boers’ conception of the native is so totally different from ours, that they actually repudiate any idea of equality, whilst we, as all the world knows, regard him as a brother; “they,” the preacher, as we have seen (voicing the sentiment of the statesman), appropriately reminds us, “are for privilege; we are for equality.” But then comes the Government organ, and after commenting on the new discovery of the late Colonial Secretary, considerately tells us that “if this was the situation of the Kaffirs before the annexation, it will assuredly be no worse under British rule.”² So that we are rather perplexed, and have to ask which is it to be—are the natives to be treated as “equals,” or are they to be thankful for the small mercy of finding that they are really no worse off than they were when equality was repudiated?

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons*, March 19, 1903.

² *The Standard*, March 20, 1903.

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A third alternative presents itself. Will there be a change, but not for the better? Will the unfortunate Kaffir, whom we were supposed to rescue from a slavery now found to be purely mythical, be reduced to a condition which shall lead him to sigh for the days of the Republic? The question is forced upon us, both by our past history and by current events. Whilst the Boers are at length absolved from the charge of gross ill-treatment, our own record has been accurately described by Mr Morley as most abominable;¹ and one gentleman, whose testimony should carry some weight with the Church, the Rev. J. S. Moffat, intimated during the war that whilst the Boer without affectation treats the native as an inferior being, the European Uitlander has adopted the Boer view with alacrity, and is quite willing to go one better, and that the native had little to hope for from Colonial Governments and Colonial public opinion in the time then coming.² Ah! but the Home Government will override the Colonial Government; nay, such Government does not at present independently exist in the conquered provinces, and before establishing it we shall take good care to secure improved treatment of the natives. Shall we, dare we, can we? Or are not the men whose one solid grievance against the Boer Government was that they were not permitted to have a free hand with the native, and who so largely fomented the war in the interests of cheap labour, masters of the situation? Here, again, we may usefully see what Mr Chamberlain has had to say

¹ *Speech at Oxford*, June 9, 1900.

² *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1900, article on "The Native Races."

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upon the subject ; for he has given us an explicit intimation as to the attitude of the Government. And that attitude is, that this is not a question in which we can force our Colonies against their will, if they differ from us ; that, whilst they are at present for certain purposes Crown Colonies, it is the policy of the Government to treat them, with regard to legislative action, as if they were a self-governing Colony ; that we must try and find out what they would do if they were already self-governing, and then act upon that basis ; and that there is no idea of using our theoretical supremacy against the feeling of the vast majority of the people of South Africa.¹ Nor was this laid down in ignorance of what that feeling was (or was supposed to be) or of the course proposed to be taken ; for in the same speech we have an intimation to the effect that there was a very general belief throughout South Africa that the natives should, in their own interest as in the interest of the country, be "induced to work" ; and amongst the methods of inducement are instanced the holding out to them of the prospect of satisfying their needs and desires, including a weakness for extra wives and a love of finery. So that it was apparently hoped that, through the instrumentality of polygamy, amongst other things, the Kaffir would cheerfully consent to withdraw himself from the light of heaven, and spend a great portion of his waking hours in the congenial atmosphere of the mines. And this he is to do in his own interest and in the "interest of the country" (for which the mine-owners have such solicitude), and

¹ *Speech in the House of Commons, March 24, 1903.*

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if the love of finery is not sufficiently strong, well it is only one of the modes of inducement, and other modes can be found—such, for instance, as “the gentle stimulus of cowhide”¹—for it is all essential that the mines should be made to “pay”; and hitherto some dozen of the more important of them have, it appears, only yielded dividends on the average of from 20 to 179 per cent., or on the collective average the paltry return of about 60 per cent.

Yet one hope there is for the Kaffir—he may be rescued by the Chinese coolie. The resources of civilization are inexhaustible; and the discovery has now been made that it is cheaper after all to import labour than to obtain it on the spot. The experiment was first tried of drafting 1000 natives from Central Africa, but unfortunately the change from a hot to a cold climate proved so disastrous as to involve considerable wastage; and, although another 5000 may be recruited, it has been felt that this source required to be supplemented; and China is now regarded as the happy hunting ground. It is true the bulk of the inhabitants of the Transvaal have not taken kindly to the idea; but then that does not matter, as they have no votes—the war, which was to extend the franchise, has resulted in wholesale disfranchisement; and it is fortunate that this is so, since under popular government the labour problem could never be solved (although, curiously enough, the *Standard* plaintively confesses² that “somehow the problem was solved, and apparently in a fairly satisfactory fashion, under the Boer

¹ *Blue Book*, Cd. 2025, p. 12. “Almost without exception the compound police carried sjamboks.” *Ibid.* ² February 17, 1904.

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régime”). Originally it was thought there would be an increased demand for white labour ; but the English miners¹ have an extravagant idea as to their legitimate share of the gold they win from the bowels of the earth ; and, moreover, they would by combination “become so strong as to be able to more or less dictate, not only on the question of wages, but also on political questions by the power of their votes when representative government is established,” so that the supremacy of the Randlords would be seriously threatened ; and, of course, they have the first claim to our consideration. Thus although, as another divine tells us, “God has added to this Empire a diamond field, a land whose harvest is pure gold, or whose rich mines are of ruby, rocks of opal,” these are not for the British workmen, but are the preserves of the cosmopolitan capitalists, who, recognising little allegiance either to Europe or to Africa, look with benignant impartiality to Asia for their serfs. Our new territory, therefore, has witnessed an influx of Chinese labourers, allured by the wage of a little over a penny an hour, with food, housing, and (the all-important) medical attendance thrown in, to swallow a Labour Ordinance with a good round dozen penalties. They are duly “indentured,” prohibited from leaving the scene of their congenial employment unless a “permit” is graciously accorded them (which must not authorise absence for more

¹ “The war was in a certain sense a miners’ war—that was to say, it had been undertaken in order that justice might be done to the British miners of the Transvaal.”—Mr Chamberlain at Chase Town, October 8, 1900. As to the effects of the Chinese invasion, see *Yellow Labour*, by Thomas Naylor, London, New Reform Club, 1904.

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than forty-eight hours), liable to imprisonment if they desert (as some of them have done after a few days' experience, suffering the penalty, whilst others shortly afterwards mutinied) or refuse to work; and any person harbouring or aiding or abetting a "deserter" can be fined £50 and in default sent to gaol.¹ Such is one of the results of a war which we were told was fought to prevent slavery—a slavery since discovered to be non-existent—and the only high ecclesiastic to record a vote of protest is the courageous Bishop of Hereford, the notable dignitary who from the dark days of the war downwards has been the consistent exponent of Christian principles. It seems a rather gloomy outlook; but the Church, which is fertile in resources, can still brighten the horizon; for will there not be a glorious opportunity to convert the "heathen Chinese"?—so glorious that it is confidently hoped "to see many of them sent back to their country good practising Christians"!

To return however to the respected author of the sermons we are considering—to whom the course of events, suggesting the foregoing digression, has been rather unkind—we read that

"The natives will be regarded as wards of the Government, and guarded against exploitation of conscienceless

¹ See The Labour Importation Ordinance, *Blue-book*, Cd. 1941. The *Standard's* frank observation is again worth noting: "There is something extremely repellent to English notions in this immigration of a draft of labourers, under precautions and restrictions which would seem better suited to convicts than to free working men." June 21, 1904. It is now reported that the Chinese are subjected to sjambokking by the mining officials, and to imprisonment and lashes by order of magistrates.

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companies or money-makers, be they miners or liquor-sellers. We cannot afford to lose the respect of the civilised world by attempting less than that, nor can we afford any better to alienate such sections of our own people as are not able to regard the war without grave apprehension, but who glory equally with ourselves in England's record as the fear of the oppressors and the hope of the oppressed. Nor can we afford to lose our own self-respect."

This is what we were to "attempt"; it is a very modest thing, for men who are "for equality" to attempt, or even to accomplish—merely to make the natives wards of the Government and to guard them against exploitation. But now we have it on authority that the attempt will not be made; our "theoretical supremacy" is not to be exercised—a most virtuous decision but for the trifling omission first to grant full representative institutions—and it looks as though the natives are after all to be left to the tender mercies of the "money-makers" (to whom the natives of another land are also to be delivered), and as though the loss of the respect of the civilised world and of our own self-respect, is to be visited upon us. To glory in England's record as the fear of the oppressors and the hope of the oppressed is no doubt a virtuous protest against oppression, but it should make us more resolved to see that England does not herself play the part of the oppressor or authorise oppression. The Boers did to some extent interpose barriers to the gratification of the greed of the capitalists; and surely there is an unconscious irony in the suggestion that we are to guard the natives from exploitation—we who have not yet learned to renounce exploitation; we who exercise arbitrary rule over some 300 millions alien

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peoples; we who "bleed" India¹ and sanction the deportation of human chattels from China; we who grant charters to "conscienceless companies," and strike bargains with mine-owners whose chief concern for the native is what they can get out of him. Yet the prognostication was confidently made as a justification for the forcible suppression of the Boer régime of "inequality" and "privilege." We who, having been "led to believe" that the treatment meted out to the natives was unworthy of a civilised Power, and having now uttered our recantation, are appealing to the Kaffir's love of finery and extra wives as one mode of inducing him to spend his days in the bowels of the earth for the white man's benefit, or are allowing him to escape (with a capitulation tax on himself and his wives) by the vicarious sacrifice of another race—we it was who were to protect the native from exploitation, and thus vindicate the war to that section of our people who regarded it with grave apprehension.² What can

¹ Mr Snell, with characteristic Imperialist courage, cites India as bearing witness that our rule is just. The facts are stated at pp. 17-30 and 238-245.

² The testimony of native chiefs is that "the treatment now is worse than it was before the country was under British rule," and that "native labourers are being sjamboked and beaten and ill-treated in many other ways by their European overseers and indunas; so much so that the boys wish to call back the days of the Republic, when the Boers dominated, stating they were better treated then and received better wages for their work." *Blue Book*, Cd. 2025, pp. 25-27.

Even with regard to our Indian subjects in the Transvaal, the same general conclusion is reached. Here again the conduct of the Boers was held up to reprobation—"Among the many misdeeds of the South African Republic, I do not know that any fills me with more indignation than its treatment of these Indians." (Lord Lansdowne, *Speech at Sheffield*, November 2, 1899.) And now it appears that for the Indians also British rule is harsher than Boer rule, and even the

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equal the calm complacency which sits in judgment upon others, and fails to see in ourselves delinquencies attributed to them?

And this is the defence—selected, as has been said, at its best—which the Christian Church has to offer for its support of an aggressive war and its encouragement of the modern Imperial spirit. It is a defence which, built up by inconclusive deductions from false premises, and having no solid foundation in reason or in fact, ignominiously collapses the moment it ceases to be buttressed by prejudice. The offspring of patriotic bias, it consists in the main of a number of bare asseverations, of course fully believed to be true, but in support of which no evidence is called, none of which can be established, and all of which can be refuted. May it not be asked, was ever a cause fraught with such momentous issues more lightly espoused? This is no mere question of “parochial politics”; it is the policy of Imperialism which is being weighed in the balance, that is to say, a policy which bears upon the destinies of millions of human beings of every race in all parts of the globe; a policy the latest episode of which has entailed the loss of more than 20,000 British soldiers, with some 70,000 wounded or invalided, has cost us 250 million pounds, and has resulted in the devastation of a territory larger than

Colonial Secretary is constrained to write Lord Milner with regard to certain proposals “His Majesty’s Government holds that it is derogatory to national honour to impose upon resident British subjects disabilities against which we had remonstrated, and to which even the law of the late South African Republic rightly interpreted did not subject them.” *Blue Book*, Cd. 2239, p. 45.

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Great Britain, the slaughter of 4000 men of another race and—saddest of all—the sacrifice from pestilence and famine of 20,000 of their women and children. Such is the policy which it is essayed to vindicate before Him who is regarded as the judge of all the earth, and by the teaching of Him who is revered as the saviour of mankind. And the vindication, stripped of the misconceptions in which it is clothed, amounts briefly to—what? A plea of self-righteousness!

THE CHURCH PATRIOTIC

There is one explanation, and one only, of the strange phenomenon we are considering. As has been said, it is not to be found in dishonesty, it is not to be traced to insincerity; there is no cant about it. The pulpit utterances ring with conviction; but it is the conviction of passion and not of reason. And the passion which leads to the eclipse or perversion of reason, the passion which induces the Christian Church to support slaughter and rapine, is the same passion as that which impels statesmen to formulate and carry out a policy of aggression, and which leads the people to shout for war. It is, as has already been incidentally pointed out, the passion of patriotism—from which springs the spirit of empire. Pride is at the bottom of the whole miserable business; that pride which the pulpit is so ready to denounce in the man, but which it extols in the community; that pride which attaches to nationality; that pride which fosters the belief, not simply that one race is superior to

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other races (if it stopped short at this, it might be a harmless conceit, and might even rest upon a substratum of truth ; though in that case the fact should rebuke pride, and engender thankfulness, humility, and modesty) but that, as the result, there is a justification for and positive good in the subjugation of other races, in bringing them under the sway of this superior race and extending its dominion and enlarging its Empire. A modern patriotic-imperialist song¹ which has become increasingly popular, after melodiously apostrophizing our native land, continues (with the inevitable pious invocation) :—

“Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set ;

God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet !”

and then proceeds to eulogise its fame and proclaims :—

“A pride that dares, and heeds not praise,

A stern and silent pride ;

Not that false joy that dreams content

With what our sires have won ;

The blood a hero sire hath spent

Still nerves a hero son.”

And it is because this feeling of pride is encouraged, glorified, and elevated to the rank of a virtue, that nations in their dealings with other nations run amuck of their moral codes. Patriotism subverts ethics and subverts Christianity ; it is for the particular purpose made the supreme standard of morality, and by a strange inversion regarded as the embodiment of Christianity. The Church falls

¹ *Land of Hope and Glory*. By Mr Arthur C. Benson. Music by Sir Edward Elgar. London, Boosey & Co.

down and worships the tribal deity, it exhorts its adherents to prostrate themselves before him (although exhortation is scarcely necessary), and priests and people alike mistake a fetich of their own creation for the God of the Gospels. It is because the Church is a patriotic Church and not a catholic Church, it is because it is falsely true to a base ideal, that it is a Church militant in the literal, gross, and demoralising sense.

A most striking illustration of this truth is seen in the way in which moral and Christian men regard the sentiments, the aims, and the actions of other countries, as compared with those of their own country. When not prejudiced by national interests, and when not biased by national pride, they can form fairly accurate judgments on questions of morals; but when so prejudiced or biased, they either see manifested in other races vices which are not specially manifested, or exaggerate those which are; and they are either blind to the vices manifested by their own race, or regard them as positive virtues. If foreign critics condemn us, it never suggests to us the possibility that our conduct is worthy of condemnation, but an explanation is sought in their envy or malice; if other people cry "shame" we find consolation in the reflection that "our own people understand us," and "by instinct feel that we are right"; and for the rest—well, of course, "all the vagabonds of the world are against us," and nothing matters so long as we are assured of our own integrity. And yet one of the greatest statesmen we ever possessed—one who never allowed his patriotism to run away with him, one whose

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desire for the welfare of his own country was scarcely greater than for the welfare of all countries, and who strove, according to opportunity, to advance the cause of humanity irrespective of race—has left on record some oft-quoted sentiments, from which if even those only who profess to follow him had sought inspiration, we might have been saved much humiliation :—

“ I, for my part, am of opinion that England will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and her pride if she should be found separating herself, through the policy she pursues abroad, from the moral support which the convictions of mankind afford ; if the day shall come when she may continue to excite the wonder and fear of other nations, but in which she shall have no part in their affection and regard.”¹

Had any other nation acted as we have acted in South Africa what a cry of indignation would have been raised from one end of the country to the other ; what pulpit declamations would have gone forth ! When we are not ourselves the aggressors, we are loud in condemnation of aggression ; when not ourselves engaged in subduing small nationalities, our sympathies are on the side of those engaged in a struggle for freedom. If we could, not only see ourselves as others see us, but see ourselves as we see others, apply to ourselves the standards we apply to others, and purge ourselves from racial pride, how much inconsistency and how much moral turpitude should we not be spared ? We boast of our greatness, we boast of our prowess, we boast of our rectitude of purpose, we boast of everything national

¹ Mr Gladstone, *Speech in the House of Commons*, June 27, 1850.

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(except perhaps our debt); we are eaten up with vanity; and it never occurs to us that what we regard as absolutely snobbish in the individual is not less snobbish in the race. The Church denounces pride as a deadly sin; but when it is exhibited collectively, it is condoned as patriotic, or rather exalted into a sign of grace. If we could only be imbued with the spirit of humanitarianism instead of the spirit of patriotism; if our priests could only substitute the catholicity of the Gospels for the exclusiveness of the Pentateuch; if the nation would only play the part of the good Samaritan instead of regarding itself as the modern Israel; then might Britain be "Great" in the noblest sense of the word. But so long as we are dominated by pride we are in truth "Little Englanders."

The marvel is that men do not realise the glaring inconsistencies into which they are betrayed, when they vainly seek to harmonise two incompatibles. It is a vivid picture which Herbert Spencer has drawn for us—one which presents this inconsistency in bold relief—in the following passage:—

"Throughout a Christendom full of churches and priests, full of pious books, full of observances directed to fostering the religion of love, encouraging mercy and insisting on forgiveness, we have an aggressiveness and a revengefulness such as savages have everywhere shown. And from people who daily read their Bibles, attend early services, and appoint weeks of prayer, there are sent out messengers of peace to inferior races, who are forthwith ousted from their lands by filibustering expeditions authorised in Downing Street; while those who resent are treated as

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'rebels,' the deaths they inflict in retaliation are called 'murders,' and the process of subduing them is named 'pacification.'"¹

The fact is, no actual Christian can essay to defend the policy of Imperialism without constantly tripping himself up. This, as was inevitable, is abundantly manifested in the volume of sermons which has been selected as the Church's apologia. We have only to contrast such portions of them as are inspired by the Gospels with those which are prompted by the dictates of patriotism, to marvel how both could have emanated from the same pulpit. Thus, we are told, on the one hand, that there is no escape from the position that war is barbarism, the business of barbarians, and its sanction is due solely to the survival of the savage in us; and, on the other, that war, though horrible, is a providential fact, one of God's judgments in the world, and that "carnage is God's daughter"; from which combined propositions we can arrive at the conclusion that the survival of the savage in us is a providential fact, and that barbarism is God's daughter (and, therefore, as has been irresistibly suggested, Christ's sister). Then we are informed that in war reason is all in abeyance, might displacing right; whilst elsewhere it is intimated that England was making a great effort in what she deemed a righteous cause; from which one seems to learn that the displacing of right may properly be deemed to be righteous. Again, it is laid down that evil can be overcome only by good, and that if evil is employed to overthrow evil, the victory is only temporary and in appearance; but then we

¹ *The Principles of Ethics*, 1893, Vol. ii. chap. xxvii. p. 257.

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come across the statements that perhaps it was worth a war to secure for South Africa a century of peaceful development, and that an English triumph means the increase and not the diminution of the reign of beneficence and rectitude.

Even where there is any superficial reconciliation of conflicting doctrines, it is based upon a misapprehension or ignoring of facts. Thus the inquiry is gravely put whether there is a man who did not know that if God gave us the victory the Transvaal would be more of a Republic than she had ever been, more truly self-governed (there is a convenient omission of any reference to the Orange Free State); and this concerning a country which, by almost every test of democratic institutions, was in advance of Great Britain, and in which poverty, the blight of our fair land (now introduced in an acute form into the former prosperous States) was practically unknown.¹ Ignorance, however, concerning the

¹ It is probable that not one in ten thousand of those who were so fond of referring to the Boer "oligarchy" has ever read the *Grondwet*, or Constitutional Law of the Transvaal. A translation is to be found in the Appendix to Mr E. B. Rose's *The Truth about the Transvaal* (see footnote, *supra*, p. 73) and the author, who lived in the country for twelve years, gives no less than thirty-two comparisons, in parallel columns, of the laws and institutions of the Transvaal and Great Britain respectively (varying from matters of the highest importance to comparatively minor concerns), nearly every one of which, from the democratic point of view, tells in favour of the Transvaal, pp. 36-43.

The patriotic conceit above expressed, that British victory meant more real self-government, is of course merely the common delusion to which racial pride gives birth. As a matter of fact every vestige of self-government has been banished from the Transvaal, and it is under oligarchic rule (although some form of representative government seems to be contemplated now that the position has been rendered so acute as to make it desirable to shift responsibility); whilst its former prosperity has disappeared (except that the Randlords are flourishing), and the country

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Transvaal becomes less surprising when it is exhibited with regard to British sentiment ; for we are told that to speak of " revenge " (which it is fully realised is anti-Christian) as a motive-force is too transparently ridiculous, too mean and despicable to deserve rebutting ; whereas the fact was that the country was simply ringing with shouts of vengeance,

generally is in a most pitiable condition. The usual parasitism has set in, and the salaries of the principal officials which under the Boer *régime* worked out at less than £26,000 a year figure at more than £64,000, and altogether the head civil servants receive £184,000 per annum. The country is loaded with a debt of about £80 per head of the population (more than four times the amount per head of our own National Debt), the taxation is appalling, and the situation most serious. " The people would to-day but ask one favour of Lord Milner, and that is to send once again to the people of England his dispatch of May 4th, 1899, which ran as follows :—' The spectacle of thousands of British subjects, kept permanently in the position of Helots chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly on Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within the Queen's dominions.' "—*Lord Milner's Record*, by R. L. Outhwaite, pp. 14, 15, London, Office of *The Echo*. Small wonder that General Smuts should long since have written (February 21, 1904) :—" Will it not yet be with this South Africa as it is to-day with the British population on the Rand ? To-day they are imploringly stretching forth their hands to the Boers to save them from the consequences of their evil work in the past. But the Boers, like Rachel's children, are not. Similarly I see the day coming when ' British ' South Africa will appeal to the ' Dutch ' to save them from the consequence of their insane policy of to-day, and I fear—I sometimes fear with an agony bitterer than death—that the ' Dutch ' will no more be there to save them or South Africa. For the Dutch, too, are being undermined and demoralised by disaster and despair, and God alone knows how far this process will yet be allowed to go." In short, as Mr Morley told us more than three years ago, (*Speech in the House of Commons*, May 23, 1901)—and time has only confirmed his verdict—the war has brought " material havoc and ruin unspeakable, unquenched and for long unquenchable racial animosities ; " and can only be regarded as " a war insensate and infatuated, a war of uncompensated mischief and irreparable wrong."

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and that the first substantial victory was to be hailed, from the Prime Minister downwards through the Press to the man in the street, with the cry of "Majuba avenged."¹ Anon, as though with some perception of the difficulty of reconciliation, and in blank despair at rational explanation, the preacher takes refuge in sheer fatalism, and intimates that it seems as if the Anglo-Saxons were the children of what the Greeks called "Necessity," and were doomed in their own despite to be a fighting people; and that he knew nothing more deplorable or pitiable than that England, whose pride it had ever been to befriend small nationalities, should feel "laid upon her" the odious business of crushing those two southern Republics. And this continuous conflict of ideas is fittingly capped by the final incongruity, in which, as the closing words of a series of sermons in defence of the war, we get the loftiest injunction, conceived in the unalloyed spirit of Christianity, an absolute recoil from the militant advocacy:—

"Let us keep down pride and envy, let us repress greed and hatred, out of which grows enmity. Let us uphold things honourable and generous, for such things ingeminate peace. Let us exalt the beatitude to its fitting place, in these days no less than in those—'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' So shall we do our part in hastening the day when men shall not learn war any more."

¹ "The death of Gordon has already been avenged. . . . That great blunder has at last been erased. There was another blunder, another humiliation, even greater than that of Khartoum, the humiliation which is connected with the name of Majuba. Perhaps it is too soon to say that that great humiliation has been erased, or that that great wrong has been avenged, but we feel that we are on the road to accomplish that." (Loud cheers.)—Lord Salisbury at the Albert Hall, May 9, 1900.

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Imperialism is the deadly foe of Christianity—an insidious foe because professing to be an ally, and thereby capturing the very priests of the Church. And this is accomplished by playing upon the patriotic sentiment, by converting racial pride and prejudice into virtues, and making blind devotion to country synonymous with devotion to truth; thus eliminating the moral code as regards collective conduct, and testing righteousness simply by nationality. “I am altogether,” says the preacher, “in favour of ‘that salutary prejudice we call country’”; and then, seeking a Christian warranty for the prejudice, finds it, *mirabile dictu*, by intimating that our Lord bade us love our neighbour, our neighbour whom we have seen and know, and exhibiting a fatal obliviousness of the pregnant answer to the question “Who is my neighbour?” “A man,” we are told, “should be very sure that his country is wickedly in the wrong before he abandons the duty of loyal and patriotic co-operation.” He need not be sure that his country is in the right before the duty is imposed upon him, the ordinary ethical obligation does not arise in the case of country, patriotism is not concerned with a positive justification for conduct, it is content with a negative; nay, it is not sufficient to believe that the conduct is wrong, before withholding co-operation, the belief must be that it is wickedly wrong. Perhaps, however, it does not much matter, for the majority of people go further even than this, and either act upon the principle of “my country, right or wrong,” or else (it comes to the same thing) have never any difficulty in feeling that their country is right.

In this way is the spirit of Imperialism fostered,

and Ecclesiasticism now, as always, carefully nourishes it, and encourages conquest and subjugation in the name of Him who declared that his kingdom was not from hence. And so bloodshed is condoned ; and the pulpit proclaims the virility of war and the effeminacy of peace, but generally with paradoxical utterance as Christian duty clashes with patriotic ardour. Says another clerical Imperialist of celebrity, the Rev. R. J. Campbell :—

“We have heard a great deal of late about the horrors of the war in which we were recently engaged. It is all a question of imagination. The horrors of war—and war is always hell—are nothing to the devastations of peace. John Ruskin¹ might well say that nations have been saved by war and destroyed by peace. One cannot be too careful in guarding one’s phrases, lest when you go from this place you may misquote me by misunderstanding me. The day will come, is coming, is at hand, we trust, when war shall be no more ; but for all that the quality which enabled our sea-dogs to win their victories, which sent the Ironsides sweeping in triumph over Naseby Field and Marston Moor, the grit and the honour and the unselfish loyalty to a national ideal which gave us Trafalgar and Waterloo—that which has been nourished in war time may be lost amid the allurements, enticements, and voluptuous influences of peace time. Are Englishmen—were Englishmen just recently—equal to the men who followed Drake and Raleigh and Cromwell and Nelson and Wellington? I trow not, and I speak at first hand. In South Africa one noted again and again with sorrow and something approaching shame a certain deterioration in the spirit and the quality of the men who were fighting our battles. Here I speak with the utmost reserve, respect, and discrimination. Nothing could have been finer than to witness the spirit

¹ Concerning Ruskin’s views of war, the reader may be referred to *Patriotism and Ethics* (footnote, *supra*, p. 112), p. 274.

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and the courage of some of our soldiers amid discouraging scenes and frequent defeats in that far-off land. But the leaders! I saw them, knew them, at first hand; those were not the men who won on Naseby Field, nor could they seem by any stretch of imagination to be the descendants of such.”¹

Consistently with the prevailing inconsistency, the most numerous and most elaborate of the monuments erected in our national cathedrals are those of warriors; the success of arms is celebrated by services of thanksgiving; and for the General returning from a triumphant crusade of slaughter the church bells are set ringing in harmony (or, to speak more accurately—both in a literal and a metaphorical sense—in discord) with the strains of martial music. To quote Herbert Spencer again—when he asks us to consider what might be said of us by an independent observer living in the far future, on a discovery of the chronicles of our race:—

“The records show that to keep up the remembrance of a great victory gained over a neighbouring nation, they held for many years an annual banquet, much in the spirit of the commemorative scalp-dances of still more barbarous peoples; and there was never wanting a priest to ask on the banquet a blessing from one they named the God of Love. . . . Though they were angry with those who did not nominally believe in Christianity (which was the name of their religion), yet they ridiculed those who really believed in it; for some few people among them, nicknamed Quakers, who aimed to carry out Christian precepts instead of Jewish precepts, they made butts for their jokes. . . . We think it almost impossible that, in the same society, there should be daily practised principles of quite opposite kinds; and it seems

¹ Sermon on *Some Signs of the Times*, London: The Christian Commonwealth Office, 1903.

to us scarcely credible that men should have, or profess to have, beliefs with which their acts are absolutely irreconcilable. . . . Yet the revelations yielded by these ancient remains show us that societies could hold together, notwithstanding what we should think a chaos of conduct and of opinion. Nay more, they show us that it was possible for men to profess one thing and do another, without betraying a consciousness of inconsistency. One piece of evidence is curiously to the point. Among their multitudinous agencies for beneficent purposes, the English had a 'Naval and Military Bible Society'—a society for distributing copies of their sacred book among their professional fighters on sea and land, and this society was subscribed to, and chiefly managed by, leaders among these fighters. It is, indeed, suggested by the reporter, that for these classes of men they had an expurgated edition of their sacred book, from which the injunction to 'return good for evil' and 'turn the cheek to the smiter' were omitted. It may have been so ; but, even if so, we have a remarkable instance of the extent to which conviction and conduct may be diametrically opposed, without any apparent perception that they are opposed."¹

Said Charles Bradlaugh ;—

"There was the progress they were told Christianity had made. Progress ! when the whole of Europe was an armed camp, and the priests on both sides were blessing their cursed weapons. Progress ! They preached peace and practised war, and then wondered that I was an unbeliever."²

Christianity has been a potent factor in the development of the race, but it has never yet conquered Imperialism ; and after the lapse of nineteen centuries, during the greater part of which it has been the

¹ *The Study of Sociology*, chap. vi. pp. 141-4.

² *Speech at Newcastle*, September 10, 1889.

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dominant creed of the western world, we find that men are actuated by the ideas, the ambitions, and the aims of the so-called pagan nations of old.

Had the Church only been true to the principles upon which it is founded, had it preached catholicity and not patriotism, universal brotherhood instead of racial supremacy, it is not too much to say that, with the enormous influence it can exercise, we might now, in lieu of witnessing the eternal struggle for dominion and empire, be approaching the realisation of the poet's dream of the federation of the world. But so long as the Church remains a power in the land, and at the same time embodies that "distortion of Christianity" by which the spirit of ascendancy is assiduously fostered and aggressive warfare is recognised as a divine mandate, the era of peace on earth and goodwill to man will never be inaugurated. Hitherto protests against the lust of conquest and the love of predominance have mainly come from pure ethicists—those who seek no superhuman sanction for morality—and there are not wanting signs that Ecclesiasticism is adding to their ranks, and is itself becoming a waning force. However this may be, before the demon of Imperialism can be exorcised, one of two things must happen ; either the Church will be dethroned, or—it is a significant alternative—the Church will find her Lord.

V

THE ETHICS OF EMPIRE

"BENEVOLENT DESPOTISM"

THE British Empire comprises some 13 million square miles of territory, with a population of over 400 millions.¹ Of this the territory of the United Kingdom forms less than a hundredth part, and its population is approximately ten per cent. of the total. The inhabitants of the more or less self-governing Colonies account for, say, a further four per cent. (although, of course, of these there are many who do not enjoy complete political freedom), the Colonies without self-government constitute something less than two per cent.; and the remainder, that is about eighty-four per cent. or some 350 millions, are members of subject races, the bulk of whom are practically ruled by the officials of the dominant race.

This rule is arbitrary; it is commonly supposed to be benignant; and it is not unfrequently referred to as "benevolent despotism." The adjective may be taken to express that apology which, it seems to be intuitively felt, government by an alien race demands. For the principle of liberty, with its resulting principle of self-government, is so firmly established

¹ This includes the Indian Native States, Egypt and the Soudan, and various Protectorates.

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in the mind of the average Englishman, that when he sanctions or approves despotic rule he is driven to formulate some moral justification for it, and this he thinks he does by calling it benevolent. Naked despotism is repugnant to him, but "benevolent" despotism—when exercised by a "superior race," such as that to which he belongs—sounds reassuring.

That the rule, if arbitrary, is beneficent (for this is, presumably, the sense in which the term "benevolent" is used, rather than in its strict etymological sense of "well-wishing") he has not the slightest doubt, for the simple reason that he seldom knows anything of its exact nature; and when he does, although he may deplore some incidents attending it, he always finds consolation in the reflection that the condition of the governed would be infinitely worse if they were left to their own resources. The subject peoples are some thousands of miles away; of their actual condition only a comparatively small number of British citizens have any personal knowledge; the official reports are generally of the most roseate character; the unofficial investigations command but limited attention; the press, as a rule, assiduously reflects, or rather to some extent creates, the prevailing optimism; and the general conclusion is that it is a positive boon for any body of men to be brought within the sphere of "British influence."

The popular defence, then, of the arbitrary rule of subject races—if there can be said to be a popular defence of that which the vast majority, when they

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chance to think about the matter at all, regard simply as part of the established order of things—rests upon two hypotheses; the first that benevolence justifies despotism, and the second that benevolence characterises despotism. Can either of these hypotheses be verified? The one raises a question of ethics, the other a question of fact; and hence the method of investigation must be different.

That such investigation is one of paramount importance is self-evident, when we recall to mind the enormous area of the territory and the vastness of the population, both positive and relative, over which our dominion extends, and remember also how rapidly that dominion has spread. Of this territory and population it is calculated that one-third of the first, or one-fourth of the second, has been added to the Empire since the year 1870:¹ it is the outcome of modern Imperialism—the new *Zeitgeist*. The freedom enjoyed by Englishmen is denied to vast dependencies which are about eight times as populous as the United Kingdom; and the work of subjugation has been going on apace.

A heavy responsibility thus rests upon the dominant race; there must be an absolute justification for their domination and expansion, or they stand convicted of a colossal wrong. Unless the Imperialist can actually verify both the hypotheses referred to, he is condemned by the principle of liberty to which he professes allegiance, and his rule resolves itself into tyranny pure and simple.

¹ See *Imperialism, a Study*. By J. A. Hobson (footnote, *supra*, p. 123), pp. 18, 19.

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THE PROCESS OF SUBJUGATION

Now alien dominion has almost invariably to be preceded by conquest. Coloured races do not intuitively perceive the advantage of relinquishing their freedom, and voluntarily submit themselves to a foreign yoke; and before we can govern them we have to subdue them. The question, therefore, of whether despotic rule is justifiable must, in the first instance, take the form of an inquiry as to whether subjugation is justifiable. No doubt, whatever be the result of that inquiry, it does not dispose of the problem; since the fact remains that we have (rightly or wrongly) compelled innumerable tribes to recognise our supremacy; and that being so, we must accept the responsibilities of the situation, and the question of whether or not we are properly discharging those responsibilities has in any case to be faced. But the nature of those responsibilities must in part be determined by the answer we give to the preliminary inquiry; whilst the modern development of aggressive Imperialism raises such question to the first rank.

Is there, then, a moral basis for the subjugation of one race by another race? The material basis, is of course, superior force: but it is impossible to extract from this any moral basis. What we have to discover is, whether or not superior force can be legitimately employed for the purpose indicated; and, if so, what are the conditions which make its employment legitimate.

In considering this initial problem we are, in the

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first place, confronted with the fact that various races are, or were, in almost exclusive possession of definite portions of the globe, and that unless we are prepared to elevate the maxim *beati possedentes* into an ethical axiom, this points to at least the theoretical possibility of recourse to force being justifiable. For access to the soil is essential to man's existence, and if a comparatively scanty population, roving possibly over immense tracts of land, should assert absolute territorial rights and refuse admittance to any outside, it might be equivalent to denying the latter the right to exist. If a claim to the absolute individual ownership of the soil is untenable (and, anomalous as are our English land laws, even they stop short of recognising this) as being inimical to the general interests of the community, such a claim on the part of a group of individuals might prove inimical to the interests of the rest of the world. Possession may be nine points of the law, and it may also be several points of morality, but it must in the last instance yield to the common necessities of the race; and whilst a large group welded together undoubtedly acquire definite rights in respect of the territory they occupy and have developed, they did not create that territory and can establish no title to its exclusive and unqualified appropriation. Morality is concerned with the conduct of man to man, and this presupposes the existence of man, and therefore recognises, in the first place, a common right to obtain the necessities of existence; and, since the absolute ownership of land for all purposes and under all conditions, whether by an individual or by

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a group, may mean the power to determine whether others shall exist, if this is conceded morality disappears. To take two extremes; in one given area population may be so dense as to render healthy existence impossible; in another given area population may be so sparse as to allow of almost limitless expansion. If, then, mere possession of territory conferred the right of unqualified monopoly, the many might starve whilst the few were plethoric; and, yet, such an unqualified monopoly might be claimed, and only by force be successfully disputed. Hence, that it is within the bounds of possibility for circumstances to arise which should justify recourse to subjugation is manifest.

But the argument may be carried a stage further, and illustrations of a different character selected. If morality is concerned with the conduct of man to man, not only does it presuppose the existence of man, but its supreme function is to secure such freedom and opportunity to enjoy that existence as shall be consistent with the like freedom and opportunity of others. This may be infringed in a variety of ways. Not only may life itself be ruthlessly destroyed, but such torture or cruelty may be practised as may even render death preferable to life. Men may live in a state of terrorism under some tyrannical ruler or despotic body and be almost powerless to help themselves. Or a race may itself be the tyrant—a veritable *hostis humani generis*—inflicting revolting barbarities upon other races. To assert that in these cases a foreign Power, if one exist with the will and capacity to arrest the inhumanity, must be content to play the part of passive spectators, in the

name of national or racial rights, would once more exhibit a strange ethical misconception. It is true that there are some who discover in Christianity the proclamation of an absolute doctrine of non-physical resistance to evil, and they at least offer a valuable protest against the converse extreme doctrine of the *lex talionis*, and are entitled to all honour in a world where the latter doctrine finds ready acceptance, not less by so-called Christian than by other nations. But to withdraw all restraint upon individual licence would speedily reduce society to anarchy—using the term in its popular and worst sense and not in its academic and best sense. And if society is justified in seeking to prevent individual crime, it is difficult to see why nations should not be justified in seeking to prevent racial crime ; and it is possible that this can only be effected by subjugation. Lest, however, this statement should lead to hasty generalisation in accordance with pre-conceived opinion, let it be stated that all the argument as thus baldly enunciated, can establish, is the indefensibility of laying down a general rule to the effect that conquest must be necessarily and always inherently vicious. A positive principle has yet to be arrived at.

Without further multiplying illustrations as to the possibility of circumstances amounting to justification for subjugation—illustrations which are little needed in an age when the spirit of conquest is in the ascendancy, and which have, indeed, partly been cited as affording some clue to the nature of the positive principle referred to, and as suggesting that the justification must be of a more solid character than that usually advanced—the other side of the

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case must now be examined for a moment. Obviously subjugation is in itself a bad thing. It can only be brought about by the employment of physical force, or in other words by war. And war, in the first place, means the destruction of life, and to that extent is an acknowledgment of the impotence of morality. Nor can it be regarded in the light of moral retribution, since, though we assume that life may be justly forfeited to the community, the penalties of war are seldom visited upon the guilty, and are in no case confined to them. Indeed, one of the most damning features of war, even if it can be contemplated as punitive, is that there is invariably vicarious atonement; that its pains to a greater or less extent (generally greater) are borne by the innocent. Nor do its horrors stop at the destruction of life, for those who are suddenly cut down are spared the prolonged physical agonies which it inevitably brings to numbers of the living—here again not, as a rule, to the actual culprits. And, once more, war for the time being is subversive of liberty; and, when it results in subjugation, means the permanent arrest of liberty; whilst liberty is the one thing which is dear to man all the world over, the one thing not to be lightly tampered with. Hence, an evil which can only be remedied at the cost of life or poignant physical and mental suffering, and at the cost of liberty, must be grave indeed. We are in fact driven to find refuge in a paradox, and to say that the only justification for the destruction of life and liberty is to prevent the destruction of life and liberty. There are many wrongs in this world which, if no peaceful remedy for them can be

discovered, moral men must be content to endure, lest in seeking to remove them by force they commit a greater wrong. The sword is a two-edged weapon : it may be typical of justice, but it must result in injustice ; and justice is dearly bought at the cost of a greater injustice.

If, then, a moral basis for the subjugation of one race by another race is to be found, it can only be in that principle which, for want of a better name, may be called Humanitarianism. The term is one to which different significations are attached, but it is perhaps the best word that can be selected to indicate the promotion of the general welfare of mankind. It imports a recognition of the solidarity of the human race ; it means that the good of the individual or of the group must yield to the common good, and that only by promoting the common good can the maximum individual good be secured ; it implies that the progress of the world, without distinction of race, colour, or nationality, should be the paramount object of human effort. And when this principle demands—and only when this principle demands—the subjugation of an alien race, and when in pursuance of that principle (and of no other) the work of subjugation is undertaken, the ethical justification is established. Personal or national gain on the part of the conquering race (other than such as shall accrue to mankind in general) must be neither sought nor obtained ; an honesty of purpose is essential, and the pursuit of selfish interests (as distinct from self-preservation) is absolutely forbidden. There must be an actual benefit, eventually if not immediately, conferred upon the subjugated peoples, and a con-

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tribution made towards the advancement of civilisation. Unless these essential conditions are complied with, no ethical case can be established for the withdrawal of liberty, or for the enormous evil which is consequent on the process.

Theoretically, then, this particular problem, difficult though it is, seems to admit of solution. If we have not arrived at its actual solution as it presents itself in varying forms in national experience, we have, it is submitted, an unimpeachable guiding principle for men who claim to be governed by moral considerations, in the application of which the solution should be found in each particular case. Practically, however, it is to be feared we have made little appreciable progress. For when we look at the question from the historical point of view, we find that the essential conditions are never complied with, and that as a matter of fact subjugation does not proceed from humanitarianism ; and to demand that it should, seems to "ask more of human nature than human nature is capable of giving."

Of course the common belief is that the welfare of the conquered race will undoubtedly be promoted and the cause of civilisation advanced ; and to this constant expression is given in defence of conquest ; thereby, at any rate, recognising the necessity of a justification, and in part the validity of the principle laid down. But on the other hand there is perfect candour as regards the pursuit of national interests ; the advantages of expansion and need for new markets are frankly, if inconclusively, proclaimed ; and although to this extent it may seem that the

validity of the principle is challenged, yet it is scarcely so in fact, for it is generally sought to reconcile the pursuit of national interests with the promotion of the good of mankind as a whole. However this may be, it is safe to say, that selfish considerations of some character are invariably present, and that they generally preponderate, if they do not constitute the sole motive. Whatever attempts may subsequently be made to temper despotism with benevolence, subjugation itself is determined upon almost entirely from patriotic considerations. Certainly no instance can be cited of the conquest of another race having been undertaken without regard to the interests of the conquerors, and solely with a view to promote the welfare of mankind ; and the dominant consideration is the acquisition of territory. As regards conflicts between white races, perhaps a rare illustration may be found of benignity both of purpose and of result in the American Civil War, but it cannot be said that the liberation of the slaves was the only motive which inspired the North. And in modern history, the two occasions when humanitarianism not only justified but strenuously demanded intervention on the part of the great Powers for the purpose of arresting the most abominable tyranny—recourse to physical force would not have been necessary had they presented a united front—no such intervention took place ; and Armenia and Macedonia presented scenes of horror which were a disgrace to Europe.

The contention, however, usually takes the form that (whatever be the motives animating the subjugating race) good must result, because such

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race is a superior one, representing a higher civilisation ; and their supremacy, therefore, necessarily contributes to the progress of the world. But then this contention is put forward by the subjugating race itself ; its members make themselves the sole judge of what constitutes superiority ; and whilst other "superior races" would concede that all stand upon a higher plane than that occupied by the coloured races, each regards itself as *facile princeps*. And since, if subjugation is to be undertaken on the mere ground of superiority, it is eminently desirable that it should be undertaken by the most superior, or at any rate in accordance with some consensus as to fitness, there seems to be a preliminary question to be fought out amongst the competing claimants for the honour. Mere superiority, however, affords no moral basis for subjugation ; assuming for the moment that the conquerors do stand upon a higher plane, it does not follow that their aggressive actions contribute to the progress of the world. Such a contention ignores the evils attending upon conquest, and in particular the grave evil of the withdrawal of liberty. It is in reality the growth of collective freedom that constitutes one of the main indexes of a progressive civilisation ; and to assert that civilisation is advanced by the destruction of freedom comes perilously near to a contradiction in terms. Pushed to its logical conclusion, the contention means that, having first settled the knotty point as to which is the most superior race, that race should be absolutely supreme, and hold the liberties and destinies of the world in its hands.

But is the claim to superiority, which is so

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complacently postulated, one that can be readily established by any of the numerous claimants? That the white races have a greater brain capacity and have attained a higher degree of intellectual development is not to be denied ; although the statement would probably be challenged by representatives of the coloured races, some of whom certainly exhibit the very highest mental qualities.¹ Superiority, however, is not to be determined simply by facial angles or philosophical achievements ; the moral factor is all important, and the ethical standard to which a race has attained is very largely indicated by the extent to which it is imbued with the principle of humanitarianism. And here we come back to the fact that subjugation never is undertaken in pursuance of that principle, that the motives are almost invariably selfish ; whilst the national morality of the conqueror is often inferior, and seldom superior, to that of the conquered. At the heart of the campaign against what we term "backward races" is the principle of national aggrandisement ; and the cruelty which is exhibited towards them, if different in kind, is not less defensible than that which they exhibit. Says Herbert Spencer : "The inhumanity which has been shown by the races classed as civilised, is certainly not less, and has often been greater, than that shown by the races classed as uncivilised."² And we have only to read the details attending the process of subjugation, by whatsoever people and in whatsoever period, to realise that this

¹ See pages 269, 270.

² *The Principles of Ethics*. Vol. i. p. 394.

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statement is absolutely accurate. The acquisition, extension, and maintenance of our Indian Empire have been characterised by cruel wrongs;¹ the treachery and brutality displayed towards the aborigines of South Africa have been calculated to imbue them with the idea that Christianity is a religion, not of love, but of hate; whilst amidst the revolting butchery of the Soudan, the heroic characters which are seen in lurid relief are not the victors but their Dervish victims. And if we look to other victorious nations, we find they point the same moral. Nowhere can we discover that the process of subjugation gives signs of the higher civilisation or indicates that it is inspired by altruistic motives. Nay, if we take the most recent instance pertinent to ourselves, where in the whole history of "savage" warfare shall we find a parallel to the ghastly characteristic of our South African campaign—a characteristic which shall surely render it infamous for all time—of five women or children being doomed to die of pestilence or privation for every man slain in the ranks of the enemy?

We reach, therefore, this general conclusion that, whilst theoretically it is possible to make out a case for the subjugation of one race by another, in practice the essential condition, namely, humanitarianism as the dominating factor, is invariably wanting; and conquest never has possessed, and probably never will possess, complete ethical justification.

¹ For an admirable historical resumé see *British India and England's Responsibilities*. By J. Clarke, M.A. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd. 1902.

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If it is conceded that there must nevertheless be a balancing of good and evil, and that a partial justification may exist, determined by the approximation which is made to the principle of humanitarianism, we unhappily find that, whilst subjugating races inferentially recognise the validity of the principle and always pose as benefactors, they not infrequently by their conduct absolutely ignore such principle, and in any case it occupies quite a subsidiary position. That not a tittle of good has ever resulted from conquest, or that it always partakes of unmitigated vice, would of course be an extravagant and wholly indefensible contention ; and if it were necessary to establish that, the case against alien coercion would break down. But that good to the extent to which conquering nations, in their pride or ignorance, so confidently consider to be attendant upon their actions, or that (whether in motive, aim, or result) beneficence largely figures, is a pernicious delusion. The pursuit of self-interest as the conscious or unconscious spring of action, the failure to recognise the solidarity of the race or to promote the welfare of mankind in general, the absence of any marked superiority of a moral character, are all condemnatory of the destruction of liberty involved in subjugation, as stultifying the only valid plea for that destruction.

Hence, the growth of the modern Imperialist spirit, so far from being pronounced a boon, must be regarded as a bane. Whatever conclusion may be arrived at with regard to the theory of "benevolent despotism" as applied to our actual rule of subject peoples, benevolence is assuredly not characteristic

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of the preliminary process ; and our responsibility towards those peoples is considerably enhanced by the circumstance that their conquest has invariably lacked adequate moral defence.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SUBJUGATED

The existence of the British Empire, however, remains a stupendous fact. Whether we ought or ought not to have acquired dominion over a quarter of the globe, we *have* acquired it ; and the problem, therefore, of how it should be exercised is most momentous, and is not to be summarily disposed of by demonstrating that the problem is one which, to a great extent, should never have arisen, and that alien rule has been unjustifiable *ab initio*.

Of course, it is easy to say that if wrong has been done, our duty consists in remedying it without delay ; and that if liberty has been unwarrantably taken away, it should be restored. But breaches of the moral law are not to be repaired by a stroke of the pen ; and if a governing race, exercising sway over millions of people, could be induced to believe that it ought to cease to govern, it would only give rise to chaos by abruptly acting upon that belief, and would thus be perpetrating another grave injury. The *status quo ante* can never be re-established ; nor can habits of self-reliance, if once weakened or destroyed, be restored otherwise than gradually. When a race has been robbed of its freedom ; when it has been rendered more or less dependent upon another ; when its own form of government, however crude, has been replaced by alien government ; when it

has been deprived of the means of self-defence ; and when opportunity for natural development has been denied it—when, in short, it has been reduced to the position of helpless children—for it to be suddenly abandoned and left to its own feeble and unorganised resources, would merely mean that it would become a speedy prey either to other aggressive nations or to roving piratical adventurers or, at the best, would succumb to internal feuds or tyranny. This, then, is a course which would be absolutely forbidden us, though the nation should be miraculously converted to a policy of unselfishness.

It does not, however, follow that our present rule is satisfactory, or that a solution of this momentous problem of government is found in the theory of benevolent despotism. The popular defence of arbitrary rule rests, as was intimated at the outset, upon two hypotheses—namely, that benevolence justifies despotism, and that benevolence characterises despotism ; and the main inquiry as to whether these hypotheses are valid has yet to be undertaken.

Does, then, benevolence justify despotism ? No one will deny that, if we are to have arbitrary rule, it is better it should be benevolent than otherwise. But, assuming for the moment it to be benevolent, is it vindicated ?

With regard to the preliminary process of subjugation, it has been sought to establish that this is only defensible when it proceeds upon the principle of humanitarianism, and if that is so, then the continuing process of government is only defensible upon the same principle. The one prominent feature of conquest is the denial of liberty ; the one

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prominent feature of arbitrary rule is the persistence in that denial ; it is a repetition of the original act. Whatever justification, therefore, the preliminary procedure requires is *à fortiori* required by the continuing procedure. There must be the same recognition of the solidarity of the race, the same donation to the common good, the same promotion of the progress of the world. There must be the same disregard to purely national interests, the same benefit conferred upon those who have been subjugated, the same contribution towards the advancement of civilisation. In short, there is only one moral basis for coercion, whether definite or indefinite in point of time, and whatever the nature of the coercion may be.

Now, although benevolence is an admirable and to some extent a redeeming quality, it is not (even when regarded as comprising beneficence) synonymous or co-extensive with humanitarianism, for it lacks many of the attributes intended to be connoted by the latter term. Well-wishing or well-doing is involved in that term ; but, as we have seen, much more is also involved. If humanitarianism includes benevolence, it goes far beyond it ; its vista embraces the whole race, and not simply a particular section, and it is more penetrating. This is no verbal quibble ; the justification which the defenders of despotism postulate is a mere kindly regard for the welfare of the governed ; and even as to this there is no quantitative measure, and a very little is made to go a long way. It is quite sufficient that some benefit should be conferred, or should be intended or supposed to be conferred ; the extent of the positive benefit may

be very small, whilst its relative bearing on humanity as a whole is not necessarily taken into account. The conception is generally limited to the subject race, the assumption being that particular good contributes to universal good. That this is so in some cases is, of course, perfectly true; but it is a very dangerous generalisation to make. For not only may particular good be done to some to the injury of others, but even as regards those upon whom particular good is conferred it may be far outweighed by the particular evil involved in the process. To seek to promote benevolence through the medium of despotism is, to say the least, a very delicate undertaking; to point to some benefit conferred whilst ignoring the mischief inherent in the despotism is a mere evasion; and even to establish that in the special instance the benefit is greater than the mischief is very far from conclusive. Our survey must take a wider range: despotic government is *primâ facie* antagonistic to progress; it is at the best a choice of evils; and, in seeking to justify it in special cases, we must regard its influence and effect upon humanity as a whole and not simply upon one section. And here we are met with the fact that the pursuit of self-interests is invariably largely characteristic of despotism, and that the mere tempering of despotism with benevolence does not eliminate the selfish factor. Moreover, the theory involves the idea of continued, if not permanent, arbitrary government; for to assert that such government is beneficial to the governed is inferentially to assert that it should be indefinitely prolonged; and, indeed, this is the conclusion which

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is consciously or unconsciously deduced. But if despotism is a bad thing in itself and only defensible as an alternative to something worse, then, assuming this justification can be established at a particular time and in particular circumstances, that justification cannot be permanent, but demands periodical renewal. The principle of humanitarianism enforces this demand, it will be satisfied with nothing less, it must be progressive; whereas the principle of benevolence does not enforce the demand, it is less exacting, and is content to be stationary. Briefly, beneficence at the best can only be a mitigating feature of arbitrary rule; it can never amount to a complete vindication.

It is very common to compare the control of a "lower" race by a "superior" race to the control of children by parents, and this analogy is confidently regarded as an effective answer to the critic. Just as children on account of their immaturity stand in need of discipline and guidance, and cannot without courting disaster be left to their own feeble resources, so (it is urged) the undeveloped man is incapable of self-government and cannot be safely left in the enjoyment of freedom. The analogy sounds plausible, but if examined it will be found to fail in several important respects, as is generally the case when an analogy is employed to establish a proposition. In the first place, without denying that marked differences may exist between two races, it is an unprovable assumption that the one exhibits the characteristics of children and the other the qualifications of parents. The "inferior" race may be far removed from the incapacity of infancy,

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and the "superior" race may often show unequivocal signs of puerility; indeed, if the right to freedom is to depend upon its being invariably used without injury to oneself or to others, where is the nation to be found that could establish such a right or is entitled to occupy the judgment-seat? In the next place, it is to be observed that a natural responsibility attaches to a parent; the helpless infant whom he calls into being has a claim upon him so indubitable that by neglecting it he is grossly culpable; he is in duty bound to provide food, clothing and education for his offspring. But no such responsibility is imposed upon one race as regards another, although no doubt mutual obligations exist; and whilst a nation may add to its own obligation by placing itself in *quasi loco parentis*, it never in fact assumes, still less discharges, the responsibility of a parent. Again, the bond which unites father or mother with son or daughter is one of mutual affection; the true parental characteristic is self-sacrificing love and a constant endeavour to promote the welfare of the child. But the bond which unites a dominant and a subject race is not one of mutual affection, and (as we shall hereafter more fully see¹) so far from self-sacrifice on the part of the dominant race being present, the opposite characteristic is manifested, and there is certainly no constant endeavour to promote the welfare of the putative child. The most serious flaw in the analogy, however, has reference to the main purpose of control. For the primary object of parental rule of children is to develop their faculties, and that for their own benefit; it is

¹ Pages 249-254.

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a temporary and not a permanent rule, devoted to the purpose of rendering the child a self-governing person, capable as manhood is reached of exercising similar rule. The primary object of racial rule is not to develop the faculties of the governed ; even if some development takes place, it is not for their own benefit ; the rule is regarded not as temporary, but rather as permanent ; and it is not devoted to the purpose of rendering them capable of exercising similar rule. No doubt in point of time, the infancy of man is incomparable to the infancy of a race, and a far longer period is requisite for development. But a dominant nation does not work for or contemplate the abrogation of its power, even in the distant future ; its rooted idea is that of its own supremacy ; its constant aim is to secure the maintenance, and generally the extension, of that supremacy ; its fundamental conception of the relations which exist is subjective and not objective. Hence, on almost all points the analogy is absolutely false and misleading. One, and one only, of the many parental functions is selected, and the rest are implicitly or explicitly ignored. The maturity of the parent and the immaturity of the child are at the outset assumed to respectively distinguish the two races ; and then from a distorted simile, an attempt is made to convert the temporary and qualified and specialised control which a parent exercises into a justification for the permanent and unqualified and general control which a nation claims.

We pass to the consideration of the second hypothesis of the Imperialist, namely, that bene-

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violence characterises despotism. The question which this raises is, as has been intimated, one of fact ; but before examining into the actual features of arbitrary rule, it may be observed that to render it possible for despotism to be beneficent, at least one condition seems essential, namely, that the power should be vested in a single individual : whereas the rule of one race by another is collective, generally bureaucratic. Of course omniscience would really be necessary to secure perfect rule, but it is at any rate possible to conceive of an autocrat (though not easy to discover him in history) who, so far as his knowledge extended, should exercise dominion solely in the interests of his subjects. The moment, however, power is vested not in one individual but in a number of individuals, the obstacles to a beneficent sway are enormously increased, for the beneficence then depends not upon a single will but upon a number of wills. Even if it be assumed to be true that in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, it is infinitely more difficult to find a body of men, brought together by a variety of circumstances, who shall have a high moral ideal, than it is to find one man possessing such an ideal ; and even on the wide assumption that all will be actuated by the best of motives, the conception of duty will inevitably differ. Government, whether democratic, oligarchic or bureaucratic—in short, of any form other than autocratic—must be based on compromise ; and compromise, whilst perfectly valid as between men having a common interest, means when it relates to the destinies of others that full justice cannot be done. For one nation to govern another with pure

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benevolence it would be necessary that there should be absolute unanimity both as to what constitutes benevolence in given circumstances and as to how it is to be reduced into practice ; but, as the old maxim has it, *quot homines, tot sententiæ*. Hence the joint decision must be the result of a give and take process ; and, granting for the sake of argument that all are honestly desirous of doing the best for the subject race, seeing that they will inevitably have different ideas, the more noble will have to yield something to the less noble—whilst, with fallible men, it will perhaps in the result be found that what had the appearance of being beneficent in fact proved the reverse. In other words, the limitations of human nature are such that arbitrary rule, however well intentioned, can only be tempered with a certain amount of benignity. Whilst despotism need not be (although it often is) the same thing as pure tyranny, whilst it may stop somewhere short of this, the exact halting place depends upon the will, intelligence, prescience and agreement of a number of persons of varying individuality, temperament, wisdom and rectitude.

So far then as ratiocination goes it seems to be clearly established that there can be no such thing as benevolent despotism. But it is sometimes intimated that an ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory, and it has already been granted that the question of whether or not benevolence does characterise despotism is one of fact. To arrive, therefore, at a conclusive answer to the question we must look at alien rule as it actually manifests itself. Of course, however, it is here

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impossible to do more than briefly glance at the more prominent illustrations ; and, indeed, probably little injustice would be done if the survey were limited to our Indian Empire, seeing that this is the most conspicuous instance of Imperialism, and is usually regarded as exhibiting it in its most favourable aspects.

As to the nature and effect of our rule, in India, this has already been portrayed,¹ and need not be recapitulated ; but some additional testimony from competent authorities may be here appropriately adduced.

Says Sir William Wedderburn, who served in the Indian Government for nearly thirty years :—

“Unfortunately the people of this country have never properly realised their responsibility as proprietors of so vast a national joint-stock concern. Like careless shareholders they leave everything to their directors, who constantly assure them that all is well. True it is that India is devastated by famine and plague, that her people are suffering, and her resources overstrained. But, nevertheless, once a year, at the statutory meeting, known as the Indian Budget, our high officials, past and present, assure us that in reality she is growing more and more prosperous. From one side of the House Lord George Hamilton chants his own praises, dwelling on the Indian taxpayer's marvellous powers of recovery ; and to him Sir Henry Fowler responds from the other side, his deep voice choked with emotion, as he contemplates ‘the unspeakable blessings of British rule.’ The scene would be farcical if it were not such a tragedy for 250 millions of our fellow-creatures. What makes the case so hopeless is the low ideal displayed by the House of Commons, which is con-

¹ See pages 18-30.

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tent to applaud such vain and vulgar boastings. If, in the matter of India, we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . It is the system that is at fault. For vital defects must necessarily exist in a highly centralised system of administration, by a close service of officials, mostly foreigners, differing from the people in language, race, and religion. In such a case the interests of the rulers and ruled are not at all identical. Indeed, in certain most important respects the interests of the bureaucracy are in direct antagonism to those of the people over whom they rule. The primary interests of the people are peace, economy, and reform; which mean for them freedom from the waste of militarism, reduction of taxation, and redress of grievances. On the other hand, the professional interests of the services are to be found not so much in peace as in territorial expansion and military aggression, with their natural accompaniments of titles and decorations, and the multiplication of highly-paid appointments. To officials economy and reform are naturally distasteful, as representing reduction of emoluments, and curtailment of authority. What is the inevitable consequence of such a state of affairs? Of course, the weakest goes to the wall. . . . The tax-spender is absolute master, and the only duty of the tax-payer is to pay what is demanded from him. The results we must expect are those which usually flow from unchecked despotism. . . . The absence of all popular control gives free scope to autocratic methods, and the evil effects show themselves in every branch of the administration; and especially in legislation, which is invariably initiated by the great centralised departments for the purpose of increasing their own resources and consolidating their authority. Take for example the Salt Department. . . . The poorest coolie must pay to the Government twenty pence for leave to eat one pennyworth of salt.¹ The Salt Department naturally calls for, and readily obtains from the Government, stringent

¹ Since reduced by one-fifth.

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laws to check smuggling, and preserve this lucrative monopoly; and I have known poor women sent to jail for picking up the salt left by evaporation among the rocks by the sea-side, while others were punished for seasoning their food with salt mud taken from the creeks. . . . Mischiefs of an analogous character arise in each of the other great centralised departments: Police, Forest, Excise, Public Works, Survey, Irrigation, Sanitation, Registration, Vaccination, and so on: their name is legion. Each of these departments is represented in the rural districts by a swarm of ill-paid and hungry native subordinates, who prowl about the villages, and gradually fatten themselves by plunder and extortion. Among all these departments, and among all these petty oppressors, the life of the poorer cultivator may be likened to that of a toad under a harrow, so jarred is he and upset in all his dearest interests and prejudices. And it is the increasing irritation and unrest produced throughout the country by years of such a system that constitutes the real danger to our rule.”¹

Mr S. S. Thorburn writes :—

“The root cause of the increasing poverty and self-helplessness of the Indian peoples may be most comprehensively expressed by the term our ‘system.’ . . . Each famine that has occurred has submerged more and more of the peasantry, and as famines have of late years been increasing in frequency and intensity, more than half of the agriculturists of British India—a few favoured localities excepted—are now in about as miserable a plight as human beings not officially designated slaves or serfs can be. Our ‘system’ has disintegrated their ancient village commonwealths, involved a majority of the members in hopeless indebtedness, and transferred the proprietary or cultivating right in their best fields—the worst are worth little to usurers—to their creditors. . . . To the sympathetic dis-

¹ *Indian Policy*; Pamphlet No. 14 of the League of Liberals against Aggression and Militarism. London: The Reform Press.

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cernment of the disinterested statesman, the man who considers producers as well as production, India contains not one unit, but 300 millions of units, each a struggling atom of humanity, lying prostrate and bleeding under the wheels of the Juggernaut Car called progress on Western lines. If a country's prosperity is measured by the material volume of its wealth, a people's depends on the width of that wealth's diffusion. India, for an agricultural country, has wealth, but as our 'system' has accumulated most of it in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons, the people, the masses, are poor sweated creatures."¹

Mr W. C. Bonnerjee intimates :—

"Say what they would India was not governed in the interests of the people of India, but in the interests of the middle class and aristocratic class of this country. It was a place to which were sent the boys with whom it was a great difficulty to know what to do. They were sent there for the civil service, the forest service, the military service; as tea planters and indigo planters—anything to put those sons out of sight. . . . Up to the present time the natives had been mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for their English conquerors. No real attempt had been made to sympathise with the people or to govern them as they should be governed. . . . Englishmen were bound hand and foot to certain persons who were called their agents, were satisfied with everything they told them, and if a native Indian got up and told a different story they would remark that the natives of India were accustomed to draw the long bow and say things which were not absolutely accurate. Englishmen forgot that they were the rulers of nearly 300 millions of human beings. If England could not discharge the duties that her responsibility threw upon her she ought to say so openly and retire from India, leaving the Indians to shift for themselves."²

¹ *Problems of Indian Poverty*. London : The Fabian Society, 1902, pages 9, 10.

² See footnote, p. 240.

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Sir Henry Cotton writes :—

“There is no great harm in saying that the land belongs to ‘the State’ when the State is only another name for the people, but it is very different when the State is represented by a small minority of foreigners, who disburse nearly one-third of the revenues received from the land on the remuneration of their own servants, and who have no abiding-place on the soil and no stake in the fortunes of the country. It is because we have acted on this principle all over India, with the exception of the permanently settled districts, that we have reduced the agricultural classes to such poverty.”¹

“Not a year passes in which the local officers do not bring to the notice of the Government that the manufacturing classes are becoming impoverished. The most profitable Indian industries have been destroyed and the most valuable Indian arts have greatly deteriorated.”²

“No more complete type of a bureaucracy exists than the Indian Government, and like all other bureaucracies, its members are driven to justify their own existence by extending the sphere of their activity.”³

“The period of Lord Ripon and his immediate successors has been well described as the Golden Age of Indian reformers, when the aspirations of the people were encouraged, education and local self-government were fostered, and the foundations of Indian nationality were firmly laid. The natural trend of Anglo-Indian opinion has been to assert itself in a reactionary outburst against this development, disparaging the vantage-ground acquired in the past. In the Imperialism of Lord Curzon these reactionary tendencies have found a too willing mouth-piece.”⁴

“Legislation designed to curtail the liberty of the press and speech ; the crusade against so-called sedition, which has wisely been allowed to die out ; the attempt to abolish

¹ *New India* (see footnote, p. 24), pp. 82-83.

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

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trial by jury; the forcible introduction of harsh plague regulations, subsequently withdrawn; the blows that have been dealt at local self-government, especially in Calcutta, where, in utter disregard of repeated and emphatic expressions of public opinion, a long-standing and successful system of municipal administration has been swept away; the systematic discouragement of popular institutions; the deliberate encouragement of provincial segregation; the practical declaration of race disqualification for public offices; the proposals for fettering unaided colleges and schools, and the general sinister drift in favour of officialising all branches of education—these and other measures have had their effect in galvanising the opposition [of the press] into fresh life.”²

Commenting on the Delhi Durbar, the *Kaiser-i-Hind* wrote :—

“The time has passed by when a mere pageant, calculated to dazzle and astonish, can hide from the natives of India the corroding influence of British rule. For years past this has been apparent. . . . Our rulers have taken a new but most unstatesmanlike departure, the principle of which seems to be to deprive the people of their national heritage, to forge new chains of bitter bondage by means of unwise and unpopular legislation, to abridge the bounds of freedom instead of widening them, to render justice a huge mockery in the land, to propagate the figment of the prosperity of the masses when the facts are the very opposite, as he who runs may read, to grind them down with unseen taxes and to repress the nascent national spirit which their own free boon of higher education has universally aroused in the land. This is the reverse of the glittering shield of the Durbar. Will the British people read it and endeavour to understand its meaning before it be too late?”

Alluding to the same subject, Mr Lal Mohun Ghose,

¹ *New India*, pp. 6, 7.

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in his presidential address to the Indian National Congress said :—

“A year has now rolled by since the great political pageant held at Delhi after the almost unanimous protest of our public and representative men both in the press and on this platform. On what ground did they protest? They protested not because they were wanting in loyalty to the Sovereign whose coronation it was intended to celebrate, but because they felt that if His Majesty's Ministers had done their duty, and had laid before him an unvarnished story of his famine-stricken subjects in India, His Majesty, with his characteristic sympathy for suffering humanity, would have been the first to forbid his representative in this country to offer a pompous pageant to a starving population. . . . If even half of the vast sum spent in connection with the Delhi Durbar had been made over for the purposes of famine relief, it might have been the means of saving millions of men, women, and children from death by starvation. . . . A country in which a large portion of the people did not get more than one meal a day, and that in insufficient quantities, could not be called an El Dorado. Agriculture starved under repeated and increased revision of rents, and the people famished under a grinding taxation.”¹

That the pictures here presented—and a whole gallery might be furnished—are faithful delineations is, if not beyond controversy (for anything may be disputed), beyond confutation. No unbiassed individual can peruse the voluminous treatises of Mr Naoroji, Mr Digby and Mr Dutt,² based as they largely are on official statistics and authoritative statements, without dismay, and probably not without disgust. The ignorance and supineness, combined with complacency, which is exhibited with regard to its

¹ At Madras, December 28, 1903.

² See footnotes, pp. 19 and 26.

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largest dependency by a nation that boasts of being an Imperial race with a special aptitude and mission for government, is simply colossal. And yet India is, after all, better than a typical instance of alien rule; it is in India probably that Imperialism is seen at its best!

In the government of the numerous tribes of South Africa, who have been subdued by us or by men of our race, we see the same keen alertness to the interests of the rulers, coupled with even a greater disregard to the welfare of the ruled. "Benevolent despotism" seems to mean benevolence for the whites and despotism for the blacks; and the principle has been pursued with cunning, treachery and cruelty. The facts cannot be here detailed, but they are writ large in the chronicles of despotism, and those who run may read—if they care to do so (which as a rule they do not). "The history of our treatment of the natives in South Africa," as Mr John Morley has told us, "is one of the most abominable chapters in the history of our times."¹ And even the late Lord Salisbury was constrained gently to enjoin (without, however, indicating how the injunction was to be performed) that due precaution must be taken for the philanthropic and kindly and improving treatment of those countless indigenous races, of whose destiny he actually feared we had been too forgetful.²

Concerning our new territories in the Transvaal and Orange River district, all that need here be said³

¹ *Speech at Oxford*, June 9, 1900.

² *Speech in the House of Lords*, October 17, 1889.

³ See footnote, pp. 206-7.

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is that, whilst they at present forcibly illustrate the old maxims "*væ victis*" and "the spoils to the victors," it is tolerably certain we shall never be able to permanently govern a vast white population in a spirit of despotism; and there is little doubt we shall eventually see an autonomous South African Confederation. Egypt, however, which we entered more than twenty years ago under pledge of speedy evacuation, and in which we were supposed to develop representative institutions, is not yet within measurable distance of popular government; and, according to a past dictum of Lord Milner, the people neither comprehend nor desire it, would come to singular grief if they had it, and nobody except a few silly theorists thinks of giving it to them.¹ As regards our smaller colonies and dependencies, although not endowed with absolute autonomy and not in some cases possessing representative institutions at all, they can scarcely be regarded as typical instances of Imperialism; but whether they are only partially or are wholly controlled by the Home Government, they certainly do not testify to that control being conspicuously benevolent. Trinidad, which appears to have improper aspirations for complete representative government, revolts against an Ordinance, and indulges in rioting in the course of which several men are killed and wounded. Malta, with strange perversity, sends members to its little Parliament who are anxious the children should be taught Italian; with the result that "benevolent despotism" recasts the legislative body so that the elected representatives can be out-voted on all

¹ *England in Egypt*. London: Edward Arnold, 1893, pp. 378-9.

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questions by official members. North Borneo witnesses "friction" between the Governor and the Chartered Company anent the taking over by the Government of further territory. Hong Kong is graphically described as "a plague volcano, ever belching forth the flames and the fumes of that terrible disease which is the highest expression of human neglect of natural health laws," and as a place where "a most vigorous and virile Chinese race, full of energy, sobriety, splendid working power, and an intelligence capable of any development is, under our retrograde rule, placed in shockingly degrading conditions."¹ And even little Fiji has its narrative of woes concerning a "poll tax," "legalised slavery," and the "deportation of high chiefs." Somehow it seems that our sway never commands that appreciation it deserves.

If this brief survey has been limited to the British Empire it is not because any suggestion is made that English rule is worse than other alien rule; on the contrary, it is generally better. The characteristics of despotic government are, more or less, the same everywhere; if they were exhibited by one nation only, that would be an indication that the fault lay with the nation and not with the system, whereas it is the system that is arraigned. Imperialism is invariably bred by, and also breeds, national selfishness; and it matters not by whom despotism is exercised, benevolence is never its

¹ Surgeon-General G.J.H. Evatt, M.D., C.B., late Principal Medical Officer H.M. Troops, Hong Kong and China. *The Daily News*, March 25, 1904.

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dominant trait, if indeed benevolence is present at all. Whether we regard the Spaniard in Cuba, the Russian in Finland, the German in South-West Africa, the American in the Philippines, or the Belgian in the Congo, the arresting feature of the scene is unabashed tyranny, if not diabolical cruelty. In almost every case the mere juxtaposition of names immediately calls up a tale of horrors so familiar as to need no repetition; let a few details be supplied in one only.

The comparatively recent revelations with regard to the Congo "Free" State—thus named surely in grim irony—are calculated to make even a hardened Imperialist stand aghast. Twenty years have elapsed since the territory was ceded to the King of Belgium, who has made the usual boast in the usual self-complacent style; "Our only programme is that of the moral and material regeneration of the country"; and the result has been the creation of a "hell upon earth." Primitive barbarism has given place to "civilised" torture; slavery of the most hideous description has engulfed a whole population numbering many millions; government by individuals who recognise neither rights of property nor of person has been maintained by cannibalist subordinates, who have massacred and devoured their victims. If the required quantity of rubber (the chief product of the country) has not been forthcoming, flogging, mutilation (notably by cutting off the wrist), and death have been amongst the penalties. One object, and one only, seems to have been steadily pursued, namely, the acquisition of money; and there has apparently been scarcely any atrocity too gross by which to achieve the desired end. "Like the Sultan of Turkey, King

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Leopold has done his utmost to suppress the facts referring to the appalling system by which he and his officials have grown wealthy ; but no process of law can be called into action for the quashing of a State paper, and the infamy now stands exposed for all the world to shudder at.”¹

We may be shocked by this illustration of the length to which despotism will go, or at some of the other manifestations which from time to time force themselves upon our notice ; but the truth is that, whilst it does not necessarily or always give rise to revolting acts of cruelty, so far from its ever being largely tempered by benevolence, it has invariably one prominent characteristic, namely, the exploitation of its victims. The primary object and result of alien government is not to confer benefits upon the subject races but to obtain benefits from them. This indeed is by implication recognised in the pretentious phrases by which the extension of empire is so frequently defended, such as that trade follows the flag, that new markets must be secured, and that it is essential commercial supremacy should be maintained ; and, although these fine utterances betray an ignorance of economic laws, they sufficiently exhibit the spirit in which conquest is pursued and dominion exercised, and offer an interesting commentary on the theory of benevolence. That the nation as a whole benefits by the extension of empire is demonstrably false, that trade follows the flag is a ridiculous delusion, that new markets are required in the general interests of the home community

¹ *The Daily News*, February 15, 1904. And see *White Book, Africa*, No. 1, 1904, Cd. 1933.

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(with its millions of poor, who would be only too happy to increase their consumption), and that new markets are best obtained by conquest, are miserable fallacies.¹ But that a certain number of adventurers, capitalists, parasites, Government officials, and others, as distinct from the proletariat, derive considerable gain from Imperialist expeditions and Imperialist rule is undoubtedly true; and in this is seen an explanation of why they are so loud in defending and advocating the growth and maintenance of empire, whilst the working classes are deluded into shouting for the same policy.² The spirit is one of exploitation, and the outcome is exploitation. India, as we have seen,³ is mulct to the extent of millions per annum to the enrichment of the favoured members of the favoured race. In South Africa the native question substantially resolves itself into a question of what can be got out of the natives: and the recent war was engineered largely with the object of obtaining cheap labour. If the believer in the doctrine of benevolent despotism could be induced to read Professor Gilbert Murray's essay on the *Exploitation of Inferior Races*,⁴ and Mr Fox Bourne's works on *Blacks and Whites in South Africa*,⁵ *The Bechuana Troubles*,⁶ and *Civilisation in Congoland*,⁷—and most of them would not make serious inroads on his time—he would, it is to be hoped, be both a sadder and a wiser man.

What does exploitation mean? It is tolerably

¹ See *Commercialism and Imperialism*, *supra*, pp. 89-96 and 106-115.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

³ Pp. 22-24.

⁴ *Liberalism and the Empire*. London: R. Brimley Johnson. 1900.

⁵ London: P. S. King & Son.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

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rife at home, and is carried to considerable lengths when unhappy sempstresses, for example, toil night and day for a pittance that will not long keep body and soul together. But when it is exercised towards an inferior race there is no disguising the fact that it reduces that race to a condition akin to serfdom. Theoretically, at any rate, the sempstress is free; that is to say, if she does not like the wages of a monopolist system she has the alternative of either starving or going to the parish union. But the exploited native has in many instances not even this freedom; during the period of his contract (into which he is often induced to enter by misrepresentation) at any rate, he is little less than a slave, taken from his primitive life by the processes of the "higher civilisation" and set to work for the benefit of the "superior race." Of course it is part of the civilising process that he should be "taught the dignity of labour" (sometimes of a subterranean character)—a process for which more might be said if he were allowed to have the fruits of the labour he is to be taught is so dignified! He receives "wages"—if a few pence a day can be called such—but not unfrequently is compelled to buy his food of the employer on the truck system. All this points in the direction of slavery; but as slavery is abhorrent to the British mind, specious euphemisms are found; and we are told that what prevails is the indenture system, or the *corvée* system, or the compound system, or the location system—terms which convey little, if any, meaning to the average Englishman, although in some cases he is at length beginning to have a slight conception of what they signify. Or the same result may

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be brought about by means of taxation, and this sounds perfectly innocuous; for is not the British citizen himself pretty smartly taxed, and has not the native the same privilege of grumbling when he pays? Yet when we read of the Bechuana "rebels," as they were termed, being brought down in batches and "indentured" for five years to farmers anxious to secure cheap labour, we cannot profess much surprise at the caustic reference to our "Slave Mart." When we find laws imposing taxation for the admitted purpose, not of providing revenue, but of obtaining labour, with power to imprison for non-payment, the thought occurs that this to a certain extent is merely a less barbarous substitute for the overseer's lash—which latter, indeed, seems to be still somewhat in vogue.¹ And one mildly wonders what the liberty-loving Briton, who suggests that every one is free beneath his flag, thinks of the following advertisement, stated to have appeared in a Natal newspaper:

"ABSCONDED, an indentured Indian named 'MUNUSAMY'; discoloration of skin on left side of chest and left cheek. Also indentured Indian named 'PONUSAMY'; scar on right shoulder-blade, mole on right palm.—Anyone harbouring same will be prosecuted."²

Perhaps, however, the most striking testimony to the virtues of "benevolent despotism" is seen in the employment of native races to fight our battles for us. Wild animals are sometimes lured to their doom by means of one of their kind trained to

¹ See footnote, p. 194.

² The Colonial Secretary stated in the House of Commons, in reply to an inquiry as to the number of suicides by Indians in Natal, that the rate among free Indians was 157 per million and among indentured Indians 766 per million. June 30, 1904.

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act as a decoy, and we occasionally hear of setting a thief to catch a thief. The process has been adapted, with a magnificent effrontery and a grim sense of humour, to the needs of aggressive Imperialism ; and having extended the Empire by bringing the "inferior races" under our sway, by a masterstroke of genius we utilise them to still further extend and also to defend the Empire, and convert them into instruments for bestowing upon their brethren the boons which they themselves have obtained. It is very largely in this way that our Indian Empire has been built up ; it is very largely in this way that we have won our Egyptian campaigns ; and more recently in South Africa we improved upon the process by not disdaining the aid of the natives in the subjugation of another white race. Possibly it is this fact which explains why "methods of barbarism" are occasionally characteristic of "civilised warfare" ; but at any rate the arrangement has its distinct advantages. It is using up the less valuable material, whilst the purpose is served equally well, if not better ; it is cheaper from the monetary point of view, and quite as, if not more, efficient ; it permits the work being faithfully done without any foolish scruples ; it affords an outlet for the pent-up pugnacity of savagedom (so eminently distasteful to civilisation) which might otherwise burst loose at inconvenient seasons and with awkward consequences ; and it makes all parties happy. Decidedly there is a benevolence about this kind of despotism which is most refreshing, and must certainly vindicate it, if anything can.

Here this cursory investigation into Imperialist

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rule must close. Those who are desirous of extending it have ample means in the works of many able writers, to some few of whom reference has been made. The more it is extended the better, for then the more irresistible will be the conclusion that the government of subject peoples is pervaded by a desire to promote the interests of the dominant rather than of the servient race, and that arbitrary rule never is purely or even preponderatingly beneficent.

The stern logic of facts, not less than the ratiocinative process, proclaims that benevolent despotism is not possible. There may be—there frequently, although not invariably, is—exhibited a certain varying amount of benevolence; for the majority of men, whilst largely swayed by selfish considerations, are not wholly bad, and pure and unredeemed ruthlessness is fiendish rather than human. But the benevolence is relatively small; it is never the prominent feature of alien rule; and in an absolute sense it cannot, in the nature of things, distinguish alien rule. It neither characterises despotism, nor justifies despotism, and both the Imperialist hypotheses fail. Says John Stuart Mill:—

“The government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not and cannot exist. One people may keep another as a warren or preserve for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle farm to be worked for the profit of its own inhabitants. But if the good of the governed is the proper business of a government, it is utterly impossible that a people should directly attend to it. The utmost they can do is to give some of their best men a commission to look after it; to whom the opinion of their own country can be neither much of a guide

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in the performance of their duty, nor a competent judge of the mode in which it has been performed. . . . Real good government is not compatible with the conditions of the case. There is but a choice of imperfections. . . . To govern a country under responsibility to the people of that country, and to govern one country under responsibility to the people of another, are two very different things. What makes the excellence of the first, is that freedom is preferable to despotism ; but the last is despotism. The only choice the case admits is a choice of despotisms ; and it is not certain that the despotism of twenty millions is necessarily better than that of a few, or of one,"¹

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We have seen, then, that the attempted vindication of despotism on the score of benevolence breaks down at every point. Despotism never is and never can be benevolent in the full signification of the term ; and if it could be and were, that fact alone would not vindicate it. All that is theoretically possible is that it should be characterised by some amount of benevolence ; whilst in actual practice, where benevolence is exhibited at all, it is comparatively small, and the dominant feature of despotism is almost invariably the promotion of selfish interests operating by means of exploitation.

Only when Humanitarianism calls for the subjugation of other races is an ethical justification for it established. And since—although no instance can be cited in which conquest has been undertaken solely or mainly to promote the cause of humanity—men when engaged in the work of subjugation generally delude themselves into the belief that they

¹ *Representative Government*, chap. xviii.

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are in fact promoting such cause, let it be said that there is one principle by which they can test the righteousness of their action ; and that is the principle of unselfishness. If they can truthfully say that they seek no personal or national gain, that they are influenced by no sordid motives, that they look for no material reward ; if they can honestly acquit themselves of any feeling, of hatred, malice, animosity, or revenge ; if they can sincerely assert that they have purged themselves from the lust of conquest, the love of power, and the pride of race ; if they can conscientiously plead that they have dismissed from their minds all sense of their own superiority, all conceit as to their fitness for supremacy, all desire for national aggrandisement ; if they can before the solemn tribunal of ethics unequivocally declare that their one and only aim is to do good to others and to promote the cause of peace, progress, and brotherhood ; then, and then only, let them engage with a light heart in the destruction of liberty. They may, even after passing through such an ordeal, be mistaken—for they are but fallible—and the results they looked for may not be achieved ; but they shall at least have multiplied a hundred-fold the chances of success, and they shall at least have found that justification they now invariably postulate but woefully fail to establish.

In this light must we regard the problem of Empire. For, as has been indicated, that problem remains ; a stupendous problem, which the theory of benevolent despotism fails to solve. Great Britain, let it be recalled, has acquired dominion over a

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quarter of the globe, and the fact that it was not acquired in a spirit of humanitarianism or unselfishness does not demand (and, for cogent reasons previously pointed out, does not even justify)¹ the abrupt termination of that dominion ; and if it did, the proposal would only be regarded as evidence of lunacy. The crucial question therefore remains—How is this vast Empire to be governed for the best ?

Crucial, however, though the question is, it can scarcely be said to command appreciable attention—and for the obvious reason that, according to popular belief, the Empire is already governed for the best. The first step, therefore, towards any reform is to shatter this belief ; iconoclasm is an essential preliminary, and it is this which in the main has been here attempted. The man who is eaten up with self-conceit will not be conscious of any need for improvement, and the nation which is eaten up with pride of race will think that it can do no wrong. Unless it be possible to destroy the haughty conviction that in imposing her rule upon other races Great Britain is conferring upon them an inestimable boon ; unless it be possible to bring home to her the fact that such rule, instead of being a grand success is a lamentable failure, and that so far from altruism being its dominant feature it is characterised by gross egoism ; it is hopeless to look for any improvement, and somewhat futile therefore to propound any scheme of reform.

This preliminary task is herculean ; it is one which has for some time engaged the attention of a few earnest men, but their voices have been almost

¹ See pp. 229, 230.

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as those crying in the wilderness! Vanity is the besetting sin of all great nations ; and in this they differ from great men, the fact being that whilst the latter are frequently the most modest (for the reason that they are great) a nation is largely composed of individuals who are little, and who seek a reflected glory in the achievements of the race. It is not the great men of the nation, the men who most contribute to the greatness of that nation, whom we often find indulging in heroics and acting as though their country could do no wrong ; but it is the men whose chief offering to the common cause consists of a vicious and demoralising patriotism, under guise of which they can glorify themselves without rebuke, who are the national braggarts. And this vanity, if the besetting sin, is the one which it is the most difficult to curb, much more to eradicate. On all hands it is exalted into a virtue ; it is utilised by the unscrupulous, it is exploited by the mercenary, it is tickled by the statesman, it is fostered by the pulpit. Until men can be led to see that conceit and braggadocio are as priggish in a race as in an individual and productive of far greater evil, we may seek in vain for any change in their attitude towards alien races, or for an application to other nations of the same amount of justice as that which they practise towards men of their own nationality.

Nevertheless, mere destructive criticism can never be regarded as a wholly satisfactory performance ; and whilst to demonstrate that a proffered solution of a problem is unsound (if such it be) is to clear the ground, this, essential though it is, merely creates

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a void unless it helps to the true solution and suggests the nature of the edifice to be erected. Further, there is more probability of destructive criticism accomplishing its mission if it be accompanied by constructive effort ; whilst it may also be forcibly urged that it is incumbent upon those who think the wrong road is being traversed to point out a more excellent way. Hence this dissertation may not inappropriately be brought to a conclusion by contemplating for a moment the problem of Empire, and suggesting in what direction lies the answer to the crucial question before referred to.

Not that there is scope or need for any original solution of the problem, so far as the principle of government is concerned ; whilst the method of the application of that principle to the various parts of the Empire, the examination into the structure and function of machinery and the evolution of an efficient system, are tasks for the skilled investigator and practical statesman, and tasks as formidable as they are grave. But the goal to which all effort should be directed is sufficiently indicated, if not expressly stated, in what has been already laid down.

If despotism is a bad thing, if benevolence neither justifies nor characterises it, obviously the only legitimate general aim is to secure its abrogation ; and interim administration must promote this object. In other words, the best way to govern another race is to teach it to govern itself ; to educate it (if not already sufficiently educated) up to the point of autonomy ; to develop in it the capacity to appreciate, utilise and justify free institutions ; and gradually to accord to it greater liberty until

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the last vestige of alien rule shall disappear. "Gradually" is a vague word, but it is the only one that can be employed in a generalisation, since no arbitrary rule can be laid down as to the length of the process, and this must depend upon a variety of circumstances. In some cases the result might be achieved comparatively speedily, in others the process must be slow and require steady and persistent nurture. It is only within the last century that any approach to self-government has been made in England, and we are yet far from having attained to a true democracy: although if plutocracy was formerly all powerful and is still potent, the rule has at least not been that of an alien race. The essential point is that the government should be directed to the restoration or procreation or extension of collective liberty, for this is the prime factor in progress; and although a people may have to be assisted to acquire a just appreciation of freedom, this will never be accomplished so long as they are kept in absolute bondage. If liberty is the end, it is also very largely the means; the granting of the franchise is in itself a potent educational influence.¹ No doubt suddenly to withdraw all restraints upon men who have long been kept in subjection might, and probably would, prove disastrous; but it is by gradually relaxing the parental hand that the child eventually learns to

¹ "Every year and every month," said Mr Gladstone, referring to our Colonies (more than half a century ago), "during which they are retained under the administration of a despotic government, renders them less fit for free institutions." See *Life of William Ewart Gladstone*. By John Morley. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 1903. Vol. i. pp. 360-1.

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walk. Nor must we demand too much, or presume that because a race has not attained to our own standard, it is not entitled to freedom. Despite our boasted superiority, our own shortcomings and moral delinquencies are sufficiently grave to debar us from being too exacting with others. If we were once to apply the highest test of fitness for liberty, namely the capacity to use it without imperilling general liberty, we should not emerge from the ordeal with remarkable credit. No race in fact is in a position to rigidly scrutinise the weaknesses and failings of another race, or even the crimes of other races; and whilst we can only advance by stages, there is not the slightest excuse for remaining stationary or for perpetuating despotism. In short, in the principle of humanitarianism we have an adequate guide; if we once choose to act upon that principle the battle is three parts won, for the practical difficulties in connection with the problem are very largely of our own creating.

Of course, as has already been suggested, all this means a revolution in our ideas of government and our system of rule—ideas which are nurtured by the theory of benevolent despotism, and a system which that theory tends to stereotype. We must recognise that hitherto we have to a great extent retarded growth and development, that we have in the main been governed by selfish considerations, that we have studied the good of ourselves rather than the good of our subjects, that we have presumptuously considered the loss of independence as involving no injustice if accompanied by the establishment of British rule, and that we have been led by

conceit to regard the promotion and maintenance of our own supremacy as equivalent to advancing the progress of the world. If we would obtain a closer insight into our responsibilities, we must come down from our lofty pedestal; and then only shall we realise that, unless we are to occupy the throne of pure usurpers, we must stand in a fiduciary position; and that if we desire faithfully to discharge our obligations, the power we exercise must be directed to the single purpose of promoting the cause of humanity, and in the pursuit of this our constant aim should be the emancipation of those who are subject to our control. Only in this way can we discharge the grave responsibilities to which empire gives rise, and offer, it may be, some atonement for the grievous wrongs which in so many instances were perpetrated in the creation of empire, and which in so many instances have attended its continuance.

Whilst, however, the abrogation of despotism should be our ultimate goal, it is to be observed that the complete emancipation of subject races does not necessarily mean a lowering of the flag or a severance of connection. In our self-governing Colonies we have an admirable model; and they point to the establishment of autonomous institutions within the geographical area (which, of course, is not to be regarded as immutably fixed) and the conversion of the bond of force into the bond of affection. It is true we cannot legitimately say that to this the stamp of finality is definitely to be imparted; for complete political freedom involves the right to absolute severance, unless in any given instance such an act would endanger general liberty. If

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the Colonies should desire to snap the silken cord that binds them, there would be no ethical justification for the Mother Country seeking to prevent them by force ; and certainly, in the case of her large Colonies, she would not make the attempt. The merit of the union consists in the fact that it is a voluntary one, that it is due not to the denial but to the exercise of freedom ; and when that stage is reached in the history of those now subject to our rule, our task will have been accomplished. That the newly emancipated States would then wish for total separation there is little reason to suppose ; but if they did we must still adhere to the principle of liberty, and it would then become a question of whether total separation would in the particular case accord with or would be detrimental to that principle. Liberty, however, does not mean the isolation of races ; as has already been pointed out, no nation has a right to the exclusive and unqualified appropriation of any portion of the earth's surface ; and under any circumstances Englishmen will be found in all parts of the globe, whatever the conditions of government may be, and wherever they settle in numbers will by force of character exercise a powerful influence on that government. A community to be free need not consist of only one race ; a despotic government can, and does, exist amongst men of the same race ; a democratic government can, and does, exist amongst men of different races. The point is, not that every distinct section of the great human family should have the power to detach itself from the rest of the world, but that all those, whether belonging to one section or

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several sections, who are domiciled under a common government should eventually have an equal voice in that government, subject to a common responsibility. Men will never willingly submit to despotism, but if they enjoy the same political rights they can, though of varying nationalities, live happily together. No doubt the ties of kinship are strong, and, *ceteris paribus*, there is more cohesion between members of the same race; and hence federation between Great Britain and an alien race might not be so readily attainable as between Great Britain and her own children. But federation is the natural, it might almost be said the inevitable, result of gradual emancipation and nurtured development; whilst in our own South African Colonies we have had a striking illustration of the fact that it is possible not only for free institutions to be worked in common by men of different nationalities, but for the numerically stronger nationality to evince the warmest loyalty to an alien and distant superior Power. It is only because these free institutions were ruthlessly overridden, only because the superior Power deliberately disregarded the wishes of the majority, only because it called into play the dormant racial instinct and compelled men to choose between the ties of kinship and the ties of allegiance, that the loyalty ceased. Of the egregious blundering and criminal folly which characterised our South African diplomacy, one of the most significant features is that it led not merely to war but to civil war—or rebellion as it is usually termed. It affords a remarkable object lesson as to how despotism fails where liberty succeeds.

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If we are willing to make a practical step in the direction of emancipation, we could most appropriately commence with India. That vast country possesses men who in mental equipment are certainly not inferior to British statesmen of the present generation, although this perhaps is not taking a specially exalted standard. The cultured Indian is often superior to the cultured Englishman, and competes successfully with him at his own examinations; and one can scarcely contend that even the masses of the people would display less capacity for self-government than the maffickers of Fleet Street. Moreover, a practical programme has been formulated for us in the moderate demands of able Indians, which might be adopted without any difficulty, and would prove a good start. The leaders of Indian opinion, as Sir William Wedderburn tells us, always place their best advice and support at the disposal of the Government.

“Year after year, in the great Indian National Congress, they bring together representative men, freely elected from all the provinces, and, after careful deliberation, respectfully submit to the Government their resolutions, which contain the matured conclusions of Indian public opinion.”

Why should not their resolutions be accepted? Why should not the matured conclusions of Indian public opinion be acted upon? Nay, more. Why should not the men who thus place their advice at the disposal of the Government be part and parcel of the Government? Why should not some approach to autonomy be made? Continues Sir William :—

“Up to the present time no Indian has ever been appointed a member either of the Viceroy's Executive

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. Council, or of the Council of the Secretary of State. No wonder, therefore, that the central Government is usually out of touch with popular feeling. Since 1860, indeed, there have been nominated Indian members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council; but their functions were very limited, until the Indian Councils Amendment Act of 1892, which provided that the non-official members should be nominated by the Viceroy partly on the recommendation of certain representative bodies in India. This Act also gave these non-official members the right of interpellation, and power to discuss the Budget. It is now proposed in order to give genuine Indian public opinion an opportunity of being heard that the non-official members should be made more directly representative of the taxpayers; and that they should be empowered to move amendments and take divisions upon the various provisions of the Budget; also that the Budget should be passed item by item; the points thus raised being formally brought under the cognisance of the India Office, and afterwards of Parliament. It was further recommended that a sufficient number of representative Indians of position and experience should be nominated to the Council of the Secretary of State, on the recommendation of the elected members of the Viceroy's and Local Legislative Councils; also that there should be at least one Indian in the Executive Council of the Viceroy. Finally, in order to maintain the controlling authority of the House of Commons, it was recommended that the salary of the Secretary of State for India should be placed upon the British Estimates; and that the salutary practice, under which a Parliamentary enquiry into the whole administration of India used to be held every twenty years, should be revived, and established by Statute. It will be admitted that these proposals are of a modest and practical kind. No one can regard them as revolutionary or dangerous. Why not grant them?"¹

¹ *Indian Policy*; Pamphlet No. 14 of The League of Liberals against Aggression and Militarism. (See footnote, *supra*, p. 240.)

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In other words, why not make some attempt to enable India to work out her own salvation? In the civil administration natives have been freely employed; although it is significant that of the total salaries and expenses of the departments for 1898-99, 8000 Europeans received more than half and 130,000 Indians less than half, and that the average works out at £667 for each European and £36 for each Indian.¹ As judges, whether in the High Court or in the lower grades of the judicial service, Indians acquit themselves with credit and distinction; yet any proposal to appoint natives to the higher executive offices, or as district officers, is greeted with an outcry of disapprobation.² With regard to local government, as already indicated, there has been retrogression; and it is one of the items in the impeachment of Lord Curzon's rule that, whereas at his advent the municipality of Calcutta consisted of fifty elected and twenty-five nominated members, he reduced the elected members by half, so that the official chairman controls the body, and by a stroke of the pen representative government in the capital of India was destroyed.³

Proposals are from time to time forthcoming as to what the Imperial Government should do in the way of reforming the land system, reducing taxation, and so forth; but no solid progress will be made until the people themselves are permitted to have, through accredited representatives, a gradually in-

¹ *The Ruining of India* (footnote, p. 29), p. 4.

² *New India* (footnote, p. 24), pp. 121-123.

³ *The Failure of Lord Curzon* (*supra*, p. 27), pp. 53-9.

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creasing voice in the councils of the government. To quote Sir Henry Cotton again :—

“There are, I suppose, not many reflecting persons who will maintain that our occupation of India, as we hold it, can be of a permanent character.”¹ “Sooner or later India must again take her own rank among the nations of the East, and our action should be devoted to facilitating her progress to freedom.”² “The best solution of the problem is apparently to be found in the proposal to place India on a fraternal footing with the colonies of England.”³ “The tendency towards decentralization, though momentarily discouraged, is firmly established, and is eventually destined to resolve itself into a federated union such as prevails in the Federation of Australia and in the Canadian Dominion.”⁴ “Autonomy and not assimilation is the keynote of England’s true relations with her great colonies ; it is the keynote also of India’s destiny.”⁵

The subject, however, cannot be here pursued. It is one of magnitude, and its development calls for expert knowledge. Nor is it possible at present to forecast the exact form the evolutionary process would take ; whilst, until a willingness shall be exhibited to foster it, little would be gained by attempting to suggest its successive stages. But once let autonomy be recognised as the ultimate goal, to the attainment of which every step must be directed, and there will not be wanting in Indian genius, should British statesmanship lamentably fail, practical guidance as to the road to be travelled.

With regard to other native races, it will no doubt be contended that in some cases there would be

¹ *New India*, p. 182.

² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

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greater difficulty than with India, and the general feeling seems to be that they are permanently fixed by the order of nature (or, as some term it, by the inscrutable decrees of Providence) on a lower plane. Here, again, however, pride is largely responsible for the feeling. That there are degrees of civilisation, and that the term "backward" is not illegitimately applied to some races, is no doubt true; and it would be idle to pretend that men who have never had the faintest conception of what self-government means, and who in their primitive condition were subject to the absolute despotism of a king or chieftain, can, when there has been merely substituted the despotism of a foreign Power, present the most promising material out of which to manufacture free citizens. But no insuperable obstacle presents itself. That Canaan must be for ever cursed, or doomed to be a servant of servants until the end of time, is a dictum of combined ignorance, selfishness, and conceit. Some of the most brilliant specimens of humanity have skins as black as coal, and, given educational opportunities which the white man possesses, there is no reason to suppose that our coloured brethren, even though their normal brain capacity may be somewhat less than our own, would not acquit themselves with credit. Only recently we have a "hint of the untapped stores of creative vitality which reside in the negro nature,"¹ for example, by the production of Mr Coleridge Taylor's oratorio "The Atonement," an interesting account of which is given by Mr Raymond Blathwayt;² whilst almost

¹ *The Review of Reviews*, February 1904, p. 155.

² *The Quiver*, February 1904, p. 353.

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simultaneously we get valuable testimony from Mr Carl Schurz as to what the negro race has accomplished in America :—

“Even supposing the average negro not to be able to reach the level of the average white man, the negro may reach a much higher level than he now occupies. . . . The negro race has not only, since emancipation, accumulated an astonishing amount of property—nearly 800,000,000 dols. worth in farms, houses, and various business establishments—but has also produced not a few eminent men; eminent in literature, in medicine, in law, in mathematics, in theology, in educational work, in art, in mechanics—exceptional coloured men, to be sure, but eminent men are exceptional in any race—who have achieved their successes under conditions so difficult and disheartening as to encourage the belief that they might have accomplished much more, and that many more such men would have come forth, had their environment been more just and the opportunities more favourable.”¹

In the case, then, of the backward races also, our work lies in the direction of education; and we must pay regard especially to the children. Our coloured subjects have the same innate love of freedom as that by which we are characterised. To attempt to permanently govern them by sheer brute force only means periodic rebellions and periodic bloodshed, whilst they are probably too keenly alive to the treachery and cruelty of which they have been the victims to exhibit for us any strong affection, although they may, to a great extent, endure the ills they have rather than fly to others they know not of. But if we choose to relax

¹ “Can the South solve the Negro Problem?” *McClure's Magazine*, February 1904.

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the sternness of our rule, to treat them as human beings and not as chattels, to extend our curriculum beyond mere instruction in the "dignity of labour," and to give them opportunity and means for the development of their faculties, we shall find that they too can exhibit some appreciation of the art of self-government and some recognition of the fact that liberty is not synonymous with licence ; and it may be that we shall even be astonished at the amount of latent force which has hitherto been lost to the world, and find we have less reason than we have hitherto supposed to plume ourselves upon our innate superiority.

The gravamen of the indictment of "benevolent despotism" is that it tends to perpetuate the despotism. Whilst in practice the benevolence, if manifested at all, is relatively small, and whilst even if it were exhibited to the fullest extent that circumstances admit, it would be no adequate justification ; its supposed or actual existence obscures the facts, satisfies the conscience, and leads to acquiescence in the permanent withdrawal of liberty, instead of efforts towards its restoration.

A government, whatever its form, which is stationary in its nature, which always regards a race as being in its cradle and under permanent disability, which does not contemplate and promote growth and development and is not progressive in its aims, is inherently bad. A government which dooms the governed to abject servitude, reduces them to the condition of hewers of wood and drawers of water, represses all opportunity or incentive to rise, and at

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the best imposes upon them the manual labour of men whilst in all other respects it treats them as children, is intensely vicious. Alien rule, to be even tolerable, must be free from exploitation, must be directed to the promotion of the welfare of its subjects and the expansion of their faculties, must assist and not retard the process of evolution, and must have liberty and autonomy as its ultimate goal.

The only form of despotism which has the faintest title to be regarded as benevolent is the despotism whose constant aim is to destroy itself.

VI

THE BURDEN OF EMPIRE

THE GROWTH OF IMPERIAL EXPENDITURE

AMONG the significant and arresting features of the last decade of our national history, not the least notable or monitory is the persistent and heavy increase of taxation. The continuous pursuit of a policy of expansion, and the acquisition of vast additional territory, have necessarily proved extremely costly, and greatly added to the burden of Empire.¹

Statistics in numerous and diversified forms abound, and they all tell the same tale—a tale well calculated to arouse concern. Yet upon the bulk of the people they probably fail to make any considerable impression, owing to the fact that elaborate tables and masses of figures seldom command more than cursory attention, and that their fulness tends to obscure their moral. Moreover, it is very difficult to grasp the complete import of high numbers ; “a hundred ”

¹ Increased taxation is not necessarily to be condemned ; on the contrary, it may be an indication of progress : everything depends upon the cause or object of the taxation. Expenditure, whether by the municipality or the nation, which yields a profitable return to the community—that is which renders it healthier and happier—and, in particular, which is devoted to the collective accomplishment of beneficent work that cannot be achieved by the individual, and thus raising the standard of national life, is to be commended and encouraged.

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conveys a very definite idea, "a hundred millions" only creates a vague notion. It is quite true that every one has a lively perception of additional taxation, and generally manifests that perception by a growl; and it is also true that when the addition is due to war the cause is sufficiently in evidence. But the full extent of the expenditure and the ultimate effect of the policy are not so readily realised, for the reason that Governments have a happy knack of passing on to posterity a great portion of their exceptional obligations (as though they were remunerative investments), and that the belief strongly prevails that conquest is—eventually, if not immediately—attended with substantial recompense. Hence the actual facts are not generally appreciated, and as a consequence the warning they should convey is frequently unheeded. Only a part of the burden is felt, and its existence is attributed to anything but national folly; whilst, although this part is sufficiently weighty, it is not regarded as permanent; and, by failing to associate effect with cause, we even listen to schemes for diminishing the pressure which would positively make it more intense. Now that we have squandered our money and increased our debt in order to extend the Empire, we are invited to consolidate that Empire by bribing our Colonies and ostracizing other nations, and are told that we shall ourselves find salvation by taxing our food and diminishing our foreign supplies. Having bred a gnawing disease, we are to feed that disease at its source, and, instead of seeking a radical cure, are to discover a remedy for the evils of Imperialism in—more Imperialism.

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The striking indication of the gravity of the situation is the amount, not so much of extraordinary, as of normal expenditure. Everybody knows that war is expensive—that, as has been sagaciously said, you can have very little of it for a great deal of money—but it is the steady serious growth of ordinary taxation which calls for emphasis. The cost of our Imperialist *régime* is not to be measured merely by the special demands, however onerous, made upon the people during the prevalence of hostilities; it is in the perennial drain upon the country's resources to which such a *régime* inevitably gives rise that its weightier indictment consists. Since 1895, the period when the present Imperialist party came into power, the normal expenditure has risen annually with unvarying consistency, until in the space of nine years it shows an increase of more than 50 per cent.; that is to say, whilst it was £93,918,000 for the year ending March 31, 1895, it was £141,416,000 for the year ending March 31, 1904.¹ The "extraordinary" expenditure in the years of the Boer war was as follows:—

1899-1900	£23,217,000	1901-1902	£73,197,000
1900-1901	68,620,000	1902-1903	55,132,000

and during the three principal years of the outlay our average total expenditure was just double the amount disbursed in the year 1894-5. Of course

¹ Mr Gibson Bowles, M.P., in a recent pamphlet, shows that owing to the involved nature of the National Accounts and the omission of items from both sides, the figures usually arrived at fall short of the truth; and he makes the total receipts for 1903-4 nearly 177 millions, an increase of 70 millions in 10 years. *National Finance*. London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1904.

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the larger proportion of the cost of the war has been defrayed by means of loans upon which interest has to be paid, thereby adding to our permanent burden; and the savings of thirty years—years of comparative peace (but only comparative, because we were scarcely ever free from some “little” war, or the savings would have been more)—have disappeared. We are to-day confronted with the fact that, upon the basis of ordinary peace expenditure, for every £1 we paid in taxation ten years ago we are now called upon to pay more than 30s. owing to the growth of Imperialism; and that unless we radically alter our policy the demands made upon us will continue to increase; whilst if we acquiesce in the latest development of the policy we shall find we have less means of meeting those demands.

That the increase in the normal expenditure is mainly Imperial in nature, as distinguished from national, is fairly well demonstrated by the fact that nearly two-thirds of such increase is for military purposes alone. In round figures, the expenditure on the Army and Navy for 1894-5 was $35\frac{1}{2}$ millions, whilst for 1903-4 it was $65\frac{1}{2}$ millions¹—an increase of 30 millions (or 84 per cent.) out of a total increased expenditure of $47\frac{1}{2}$ millions. And if we add to the 30 millions the increase in the amount of the National Debt Services and deduct from the $47\frac{1}{2}$ millions the additional cost of the Post and Telegraph Services (a branch of the Administration which shows a substantial profit) we have gone a long way to explain the total increase, and cannot

¹ This is exclusive of over 6 millions spent on capital account for naval and military works. Mr Bowles gives the total at $86\frac{1}{2}$ millions, an increase of 50 millions in 10 years. See footnote, p. 275.

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escape the conclusion that the great bulk of it is due to the pursuit of a policy of Imperialism.

Nor is this all. Normal expenditure has not only risen to the alarming extent indicated ; but the tendency must be an upward one so long as the same policy prevails.¹ Imperialism demands an ever-increasing price ; for, quite apart from the cost of the wars it provokes, it means a continuous growth of armaments. It is a policy of defiance and a policy of aggression ; it engenders the hostility of other nations, and it induces them to add to their military strength ; and this in turn leads to counteracting measures,² thus imposing a greater and still greater strain upon national resources, until we bid fair to arrive at the time when all energy will be devoted to the one task of checking burglary, save when concentrated on burglarious expeditions. The worthy citizens who gained a precarious living by taking in each others' washing were in a parlous way, but they could at least boast of clean linen ; a world of Ishmaelites or of policemen would be reduced to an equally precarious means of livelihood and be more suggestive of dirty linen.

Of our present policy the danger is unmistakable ; and more than two years ago it called forth a solemn and weighty warning from no less significant a person than Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, himself an

¹ The normal expenditure for 1903-4 was several millions more than that of the previous year. And the Chancellor of the Exchequer sees "no hope for a reduction in our domestic expenditure." *Speech at the Mansion House*, June 17, 1904.

² During the past twenty years the naval and military expenditure of the European Powers (apart from war) has increased by nearly 70 per cent., while population has only increased by 21 per cent.

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Imperialist and an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Imperialist Government. Let the gist of his monition be recalled :—

“He wanted . . . to ask their attention to a matter which for the last seven years had engaged his most anxious consideration, and that was the rapid growth of the expenditure of the country. . . . The present national indifference . . . was one of the most dangerous symptoms. . . . Did anybody nowadays think of retrenchment at all? Why, day by day he saw the most wild proposals for additional and new expenditure of all kinds. . . . The ordinary estimates—the peace estimates—for the present year were, in round figures, something like forty millions more than they were seven years ago. . . . The main reasons, of course, were the enormously increased expenditure upon our Navy and Army. . . . The Army estimates had gone up from eighteen millions sterling seven years ago to twenty-nine and a half millions this year. . . . The reason for it was mainly the great extension of the Empire. . . . He had spoken plainly to them. He had spoken plainly, too, as to the dangers of their growing expenditure to the House of Commons. . . . They should remember he had told them that in the last seven years the ordinary expenditure of the country had increased at a rate of no less than five millions and a half a year. They could not go on in that way.”¹

Since these words were uttered, so far from heeding the warning (notwithstanding its source) we have continued to increase our expenditure; and in lieu of our exhibiting any disposition to amend our ways, it needs all the energies of our sane statesmen and politicians to combat still more costly schemes into which we are recklessly urged

¹ *Speech at Bristol*, September 29, 1902. And a year and a half later we find him repeating the monition—“Such an increase in taxation cannot go on in time of peace.” *Speech in the House of Commons*, April 19, 1904.

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to plunge. There is little, if any, abatement of Imperialist ardour; the very opponents of Mr Chamberlain have almost apologetically to explain that they are as devoted to the cause of empire as he is; there is apparently no suspicion that the doctrine of racial supremacy is not sound and profitable, no general indication of a desire to alter our policy. Although there is division in the ranks, Imperialism still holds the field.

Yet surely the pertinent practical question which arises is, "Does Empire pay?" Disregarding (if we will) moral considerations, ignoring (if we may) sentimental gratification, and looking at the matter purely from the financial point of view, is it not time, as we witness this burden increasing in weight and pressing more heavily upon all, that we seriously put to ourselves the inquiry, *Cui bono?* We are not Imperialists from philanthropic motives, although we no doubt mix up with our Imperialism a good deal of spurious philanthropy, and when we seek to justify an aggressive war we always talk of the benefits which accrue from British conquest and British rule. But no one pretends that we deliberately tax ourselves to the extent of millions a year for the good of humanity—indeed, we should be perfectly prepared, if we could do it, to raise revenue from other countries (the *ne plus ultra* of taxation without representation), and when an import duty is commended on the ground that it will be paid by the foreigner, whilst the fallacy of the contention is readily exposed, it never seems to occur to any one to protest against its immorality.

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Imperialism, as has been pointed out elsewhere,¹ has a twofold origin, namely, pride and greed ; and the essential point is, to what extent (if any) is greed rewarded, or in other words (for it matters not for present purposes whether the object is regarded as legitimate or illegitimate) do we obtain a material return for the expenditure. If we are to bear this burden simply to gratify our pride, let us at least not do so ignorantly ; for knowledge might tend to diminish the pride and lessen the burden. The general belief seems to be that the Empire does pay, and that whilst, as has been previously intimated,² some of the expenditure is the price of "glory," a great portion of it can be properly regarded as a satisfactory investment. Is this so ?

Obviously, if there be a material return, it is an indirect one. Armaments cannot, in the nature of things, in themselves prove remunerative ; their sole purpose is to destroy, not to create. , And a military body earns nothing, although it has to be fed and clothed ; when it is employed at all it is engaged, not in producing, but in annihilating. That there may be an indirect return is of course possible, but the fact that it can only be indirect adds to the difficulties of the Imperialist's position ; for he cannot ear-mark any item of expenditure as one that pays a dividend. Nor, beyond vague general assertions, does he in any way indicate what compensation there is ; purely Imperial book-keeping is unknown, a statement of assets and liabilities does not exist, a profit and loss account is never prepared, and the Chancellor of the Ex-

¹ See pp. 8-10.

² See p. 87.

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chequer has not yet produced the nation's Imperial balance sheet.

What is wanted is a quantification of the cost of the Empire to the United Kingdom and of the pecuniary set-off (presuming one can be found), and then we should know where we stood. And the obligation to supply this is imposed upon those who assert that the balance is on the right side, and not upon those who challenge the assertion. But as the former exhibit no alacrity to make the requisite investigation, it is necessary this should be independently attempted if we wish to ascertain the actual facts. Absolute precision is doubtless out of the question, for the reason that expenditure for national purposes is not distinguished from expenditure for Imperial purposes, and the amount of the latter therefore can only be estimated. It should, however, be possible to estimate it with a sufficient approach to accuracy to arrive at the approximate truth—sufficient at any rate to determine whether Imperialism pays.

Of course it may be said that, whatever the result be, we cannot in any case allow the Empire to be disintegrated; and it is no doubt perfectly true that the merits or demerits of Imperialism are not to be determined by purely pecuniary considerations. But they form a very important feature, and indeed with many they are the dominant feature, and with all they carry great weight; and whilst other considerations have already been discussed, the financial aspect of the question is the one with which we are here principally concerned. We have been launching out in all directions, sinking a vast

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amount of additional capital, embarking in huge speculations, and we are now invited to new departures most costly in character; the policy on the whole being defended as conducive to our interests. If we are on the wrong tack—if we have been engaged in enterprises which cannot possibly prove remunerative, if our conduct has been reckless and threatens to become more reckless, if it has been productive of tremendous loss and is calculated to result in further disaster—a realisation of the facts should surely bring about a reversal of the policy, or at any rate arrest it to the extent to which it has been pursued in the belief that it is profitable.

Let us, therefore, endeavour to ascertain what are our Imperial liabilities and expenditure, and also if we have any remunerative Imperial assets or revenue, with a view to determine whether or not Empire is a sound investment on the part of the dominant country. Whether or not it conduces to the interests of any other particular section of the Imperial group, or of the entire Imperial group regarded collectively, are distinct questions, the first of which could only be answered by a separate investigation in the case of each section, and the answer to the second of which would largely depend upon the data thus obtained. But the point which concerns us as a nation is whether the pursuit of an Imperial policy conduces to the interests of the United Kingdom.

THE PRICE OF IMPERIALISM

The British Empire—so-called—is a strange amalgam. We must take it as we find it and adopt

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conventional nomenclature, but it is a compound of at least three distinct elements which do not coalesce. First, there is the paramount power, the United Kingdom—again so-called, for it is itself engaged in incessant internal conflict, and one of its sections is in quasi-rebellion. The hybrid residue comprises, on the one hand, autonomous communities substantially independent, and on the other, subject communities arbitrarily governed; whilst to add to the incongruities, a fourth section might be differentiated in which partial autonomy is combined with partial subserviency.

Obviously there is no bond of interest common to all these diverse, and to some extent antagonistic, bodies; although the general belief seems to be that they are blended in one harmonious whole, and that the "Empire" is the most perfect and glorious political institution which the wit of the most gifted of mortals could devise. Of course the only section (no doubt by far the largest) in which true empire is illustrated is that which is absolutely subject to the dominant country; but as our Imperial policy and Imperial expenditure are by no means so limited, there is no necessity in this connection to attempt to make distinctions; although when we inquire into the question of contribution, the Colonies and dependencies must be separately regarded.

To ascertain our Imperial liabilities we have to refer to our National Debt—for, whilst it is the nation's debt, it embodies Imperial expenditure—and this also will disclose one substantial item of the annual cost of the Empire. It originated in the "King's

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"Debt," contracted by the later Stuarts, but the amount at the Revolution of 1688 was comparatively nominal, being only two-thirds of a million. Since that period, that is to say in a little over 200 years, it has grown to the colossal figure of nearly 800 millions, and this almost entirely as the result of the periodic military enterprises in which the nation has engaged. The following table as to the approximate amount of debt incurred in connection with the principal of these enterprises is sufficiently instructive :—

	Million
Wars with France during the reign of William III.	14
War with France (Spanish Succession) during the reign of Anne	21
War with Spain during the reign of George I.	15
Wars with Spain (Right of Search) and France (Austrian Succession) during the reign of George II.	29
The Seven Years' War during reign of George III.	60
American War of Independence in the same reign	110
The Great War with France in the same reign	610
The Crimean War	32
The Boer War (over £18,000,000 also diverted from Sinking Fund)	159

There have in addition been sundry "little wars," and of course the principal wars cost considerably more than the amount permanently added to the debt; indeed, during the period under review we spent altogether something like 1500 millions in slaughtering human beings and devastating territory, of which just about half still constitutes a national burden.¹

¹ The total of the table given above, comes to more than 1000 millions, but substantial payments off were from time to time made in

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It is no doubt perfectly true that a vast proportion of this huge expenditure was not directly incurred in connection with the maintenance or extension of the Empire, but it is equally true that it was incurred in pursuit of that policy of aggressiveness, self-assertion, pride or racial animosity, which are of the very essence of Imperialism. In no case were we engaged in defending our shores, in no case was "little England" in danger; in other words, if there has been any compensation or gain, it is Imperial in its nature; if any benefit has resulted from the expenditure, Imperialists are entitled to claim what credit may attach to it. Two of the wars, namely, the American and South African Wars, were unequivocally waged solely to secure Empire, and the cost of these alone was nearly one-half of the present amount of the Debt. And the whole of the wars were waged for the reason that we were and are, and sought and seek still more to be, a world-wide Power. At the time of the accession of William III., when the Debt was considerably under a million, we had, with the exception of some small islands and patches of territory (and apart, of course, from most of the American Colonies we subsequently lost) no foreign possessions—we were then on the whole rather proud of being "a little island in the Northern Sea." It is because we have developed the intervals between the great wars. The amount of the National Debt is now, as already indicated, a little under 800 millions. Of the 159 millions (which only produced £152,415,000) due to the Boer War, it is officially expected that we shall eventually obtain over £30,000,000 from the Transvaal. Of course the actual expenditure on this war does not represent its total cost: for example, the loss to the Post Office Savings Bank through the depreciation of securities works out at over 20 millions.

into an Imperial race and manifest the qualities and characteristics of an Imperial race, that we have indulged in these costly wars and have to sustain this heavy burden. There is, therefore, an absolute justification for debiting Imperialism with the whole cost of these gigantic military enterprises ; but there is no need to labour the point, since the present debt only represents about one-half of that cost ; so that if the most liberal deductions were made for what might be regarded as doubtful items, it would still remain true that our present heavy liability represents part of the price of Imperialism. The substantial fact for the present generation of Englishmen is that they find themselves saddled with a debt of nearly 800 millions, not because they or their ancestors have had to fight for their homes, but because they, in the pursuit of an Imperial policy, engaged in the ruthless and costly work of destroying the homes of other peoples.

Interest and other payments in connection with the "National Debt Services" thus constitute the first item of our annual Imperial expenditure ; and, with the provision for the New Sinking Fund, the annual charge is now fixed at 27 millions.

The other and heavier item of this expenditure is that in connection with the Army and Navy ; and at the present time this is 66 millions¹ (in round figures 29 millions on the Army and 37 millions on the Navy). With regard to this, it must of course be recognised that a powerful navy is necessary for the defence of our shores, and to some extent an army is similarly necessary ; and to this extent the

¹ But see footnote, p. 276.

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expense incurred can be properly regarded as an insurance against the risk of invasion. It is significant, however, that despite the great wars to which reference has been made, and despite the fact that scarcely a year passes without our being engaged in some military enterprise, in no instance has Great Britain been the arena of the conflict ; we fight our battles in every part of the globe save in our native land, which alone is pointedly suggestive of their being aggressive and not defensive. (Parenthetically, 'it may be remarked that if the horrors of war were brought home to us individually and collectively, we should certainly resort to arms with much less alacrity and enthusiasm than, with our present immunity, we now exhibit.) Moreover, the danger, such as it is, of a hostile attack upon our shores would be minimised by our pursuing a policy of international amity and reduction of armaments ; and we positively add to our risk by that policy of international enmity and increasing armaments which is so characteristic of Imperialism. A third of our present expenditure would be ample for our own protection.¹ The sea is our natural bulwark against aggression ; a large permanent army is unnecessary, and even with regard to the navy—and not forgetting the necessity of protecting our merchandise fleet—no one will pretend that, apart from the Empire, it need approach its present dimensions. Thirty years ago a sum of 24 millions was deemed sufficient to spend on the Army and Navy together ; although we even then boasted that

¹ During the Boer War we were practically dependent entirely upon the Navy for defence.

the sun never set upon the dominions of the Queen—and however much the Empire may have been since enlarged, our own shores have not expanded ; so that such a sum should at least be more than adequate for purely national defence. Indeed, even for the protection of the Empire, vast as it is, nothing like the present expenditure is requisite ; a great part of it is simply the cost of a policy of expansion and defiance, and is distinctly so traceable. If we had been and were willing, without abandoning anything acquired, to desist from that policy and aim at promoting international goodwill, and a general reduction of armaments, we might eventually cut down our military and naval expenditure to about 40 millions. And even of such an amount, one-half would have to be regarded as Imperial, for it seems clear that somewhere about 20 millions per annum would be a sufficient premium to ensure our own land and shipping against the risk of attack, although of course if an actual attack should unhappily occur, there would be a largely increased war disbursement for the time being. Something can no doubt be said as to the desirability of being sufficiently strong to prevent or assist in preventing acts of aggression on the part of other nations towards other nations ; but in the days when our expenditure was on an infinitely less considerable scale we were as potent in the councils of Europe, and if emergencies arise we can temporarily add to our forces ; whilst it is significant that, quick as we are to resent any insult or injury (real or supposed) to ourselves, we do not, in fact, interfere to put down the grossest cruelty by others,

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even if partly responsible for the circumstances which render it possible, as in the case of the Armenian and Macedonian horrors. Look at the matter, then, how we may, we come back to the conclusion that, apart from Imperial considerations, a third of our present naval and military expenditure should suffice in times of peace; and of our 66 millions, 44 millions can be legitimately regarded as a further part of the price of Imperialism.

If, then, we take the amount of the National Debt Services, 27 millions,¹ and the above proportion, 44 millions, of the naval and military expenditure, we get an annual Imperial (as distinguished from national) expenditure of 71 millions²—just half of our total expenditure of, in round figures, 142 millions. As, however, the latter sum includes the cost of the Post and Telegraph services (which, as has been indicated, is a remunerative expenditure), we ought for the purpose of comparison to eliminate this, in which case the total is reduced to 127 millions. The proportion of our purely Imperial expenditure is thus substantially increased, and is in fact considerably more

¹It may be suggested that as this item embodies provision for the New Sinking Fund (devoted to the repayment of the Debt), it should, for the purpose of ascertaining the imperative annual expenditure under this head, be reduced by the amount so applied. But the fact is that, outside the fixed annual charge of 27 millions, there are "charges connected with other capital liabilities," and these for the year 1903-4 brought the net expenditure up to £28,788,694, whilst the amount applied to the Sinking Fund was only £1,464,087. See *White Paper*, 1904, Cd. 2065, pp. 34-5, and also Mr Gibson Bowles' pamphlet (foot-note, *supra*, p. 275). The annual fixed charge ought to be at least 28 millions.

²Of course, according to Mr Bowles' figures the amount would be more.

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than our purely national expenditure—being 71 millions out of 127 millions. This is the normal annual pecuniary burden which empire has imposed upon us.

Let us next ascertain whether there is anything to lessen the burden—whether we have any and what Imperial assets or revenue.

We own certain shares in the Suez Canal, and as the cost of these is included in our National Debt, which has been debited to Imperialism, we must give credit for their value. This fluctuates, but may be placed at about 28 millions, and the revenue at £960,000, thus reducing the amount of the purely Imperial expenditure to say 70 millions. Then we possess our armaments, requisite partly for national and partly for Imperial purposes ; but an apportionment need not be attempted, seeing that they produce no revenue and do not therefore lighten our expenditure. And last, though it will not be considered least, there is our Empire—a somewhat peculiar “asset”—and the main inquiry therefore takes the form of what revenue can be discovered emanating from this source.

The first question we naturally ask is—do our Colonies help us? Seeing that a very large proportion of the expenditure is incurred for their protection, and that we are now asked to tax ourselves still further for the express purpose of drawing them closer to us, we should naturally expect that they would send us a substantial contribution. We hear a great deal of their loyalty and disinterested services, based on the fact that they assisted in de-

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vastating the Transvaal, at a proportionate cost to us of about five times that of our own soldiers (although, so far as Canada is concerned, Mr Carnegie has pointed out that she sent many more thousands of her sons to fight in the Northern ranks in the great Civil War, and at the same rate as paid to the American regular); let us see what that loyalty amounts to measured in pounds sterling. The Colonies incur a certain military expenditure, and also (with the exception of Canada) naval expenditure; but as this has not been taken into account in ascertaining the amount of our own Imperial burden, the latter is not thereby reduced. As an interesting comparison, however, it may be mentioned that whilst the naval and military expenditure of the United Kingdom works out at over 30s. per head, that of the Colonies averages less than 3s. per head.¹ From the Cape—the one colony charged with disloyalty

¹ It is instructive to note, in passing, how the cost of our recent great Imperial enterprise was apportioned. The Boer War cost Great Britain about £230,000,000 (*but see footnote, p. 285*); it cost the American and Australian Colonies £1,860,000; to the former it worked out at over £5, 9s. per head, to the latter it ranged from 2s. 3d. to 8s. 8d. per head, or on the average 3s. 9d. So that in proportion to population the burden imposed upon the Mother Country as compared with the Colonies is nearly 30 times as great, whilst in amount it is about 125 times as great. However, of the total we are supposed to get some £30,000,000 from the new Colonies, but in view of the method by which this interesting arrangement was effected, and of the fact that those Colonies did not, and do not at present, enjoy self-government, and that protests were urged in every district, and that the mining magnates now look to be relieved from their undertaking, it is perhaps safer not to regard this as an asset until we get it. The Cape and Natal, it will be remembered, both petitioned against the war, so that the "loyalty" of the other Colonies took the form of assisting in the coercion of their fellow colonists in a matter in which the former were only remotely and the latter were vitally interested.

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—we get a contribution of £40,000 (formerly £30,000 ;)¹ and Australia helps defray the cost of a local naval squadron, which, however, is under her control, so that instead of this assisting the Mother Country the position is reversed. And this is the extent of the colonial share of our burden ; their contribution to our Imperial expenditure is comparatively infinitesimal. Comment on the facts need not be carried beyond Mr Chamberlain's own observation at the Colonial Conference, when he intimated that it was inconsistent with the dignity of the Colonies as nations that they should leave the Mother Country to bear almost the whole of the expense of Imperial defence, and that no one would believe she would for all time make this inordinate sacrifice ;² or Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's confession that he was a little tired of the paroxysms of mutual admiration and the innumerable perorations about unity and loyalty, and his injunction to show the Colonies in our dealings with them that we could take care of the advantage of the United Kingdom just as much as they took care of their advantage in their dealings with us³—utterances which if made by a " Little Englander " would no doubt have been indignantly reprobated.

Turn we now to India, where we have a true instance of empire. Our Colonies, not being ruled by us, cannot be made to share our burden ; all we can do is to indulge in (apparently futile) appeals to them. But where empire exists, toll can be levied by

¹ Natal supplies coal for the use of His Majesty's ships, &c., to the value of £12,000 per annum.

² *Blue Book*, Cd. 1299, p. 5.

³ *Speech at Bristol*, September 29, 1902.

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the dominant race upon the subservient race, and is only limited, on the one hand by the will of the former, and on the other by the capacity of the latter ; the second limitation, as all history shows, being the more effective. The Indian people, as we have seen,¹ groan under the burden of taxation, and it is doubtful whether much more could be extracted from them, having regard to their impoverished condition and to the fact that periodically millions die of starvation. Yet it cannot be said that Great Britain derives any substantial national pecuniary benefit from the ownership of the country. For it is one of the features of Imperialism that the exploitation it fosters conduces, as a rule, to the benefit of only a comparatively small section of the Imperial race ; the British working man, for example, pays no less in taxes because tribute is levied on the unfortunate ryot. Practically the only direct national gain (if it be one) derived from India is due to the fact that she is made to maintain a huge army, out of proportion to her own requirements, which is largely utilised for service in other parts of the Empire ; but, if this were not the case, it is doubtful whether we should proportionately increase our own enormous military expenditure or whether we should not rather dispense (to our advantage from many points of view) with the additional means thus afforded of gratifying our aggressive or bellicose proclivities. The bulk of the remaining burden imposed upon India represents the cost of government (that is, the amount which goes into the pockets of the officials) the spoils of "the ill-paid and hungry native subordinates who prowl

¹ Pp. 21-29 and 238-244.

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about the villages and gradually fatten themselves by plunder and extortion,"¹ expenditure on public works, and interest paid on British capital which has been sunk in enterprises that yield no equivalent economic return to the people. Despite, then, the price which India has to pay for British rule, there is to us, nationally, no pecuniary gain that can be ear-marked and treated as a contribution towards our own expenditure.

And if neither from the Colonies nor from India do we obtain any appreciable contribution, it is in vain to look to the remaining minor portions of the Empire. Nor do we derive any indirect pecuniary gain, as is commonly supposed. The delusion that empire promotes our commercial prosperity, based on the dictum that trade follows the flag, has already been subjected to detailed investigation,² and need not therefore here detain us. There is no escaping from the fact that our Imperial expenditure of some seventy millions a year is paid by us—that it is unattended with any appreciable return—that more than half the amount of our taxation represents the price of "glory"—that we are spending this enormous annual sum because we are an Imperial Power. It is not a hallucination, as Lord Rosebery supposes,³ but a sober fact that the word Empire means expenditure and means little else.

THE REDUCTION OF IMPERIAL EXPENDITURE

Nor can we get rid of the burden. We may forget the follies and crimes of the past, but we

¹ See p. 240.

² See pp. 89-96.

³ See p. 69.

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have to pay dearly for them in the present ; we may exult in the recent expansion of the Empire, but the penalty of expansion will be exacted. We have mortgaged our property, and the interest must be met ; it is written in the bond, and the earnings of this generation and of future generations have been hypothecated.

At best we can in time lighten the burden ; at least we can see that we add not to its weight. By further sacrifice we can reduce the principal ; by wise reforms we can prevent leakage and waste ; by altering our policy we can effect a substantial diminution in our expenditure. If we cannot repudiate our National Debt, we can take care not to increase it ; if we cannot abandon the Empire we possess, we can refrain from acquiring new dominions ; if we cannot relinquish the duty of Imperial defence, we can discharge it in a less reckless and expensive manner ; if we cannot ensure immunity from attack, we can avoid inviting it. Or, on the other hand, we can in all these matters pursue exactly the opposite course—the course we have been pursuing for so many years—and thereby make the burden more oppressive. And we can also, in the endeavour to extricate ourselves from the bog into which we have floundered, continue to follow the will-o'-the-wisp by whose glamour we have been caught, as he seeks to allure us into a new quagmire with the mocking promise that we shall find a surer foothold. Which is it to be ?

The motives from which Imperialism springs are

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mixed, and the preponderating one differs with individuals.¹ With some it is a desire for personal gain, attained directly or indirectly ; and to such the national cost does not count, seeing that though they may have to bear a share, this is far outweighed by the benefits they derive. With others an idea of promoting the progress of the world undoubtedly exists ; and to such, if they still cling to the delusion that conquest and arbitrary rule make for progress, the inquiry may be put whether the results are commensurate with the cost, and whether the object would not be more largely promoted by other and less expensive methods. Neither of these classes, however, is in the majority, though possibly the views of each partly enter into consideration with all. But the bulk of Imperialists are mainly animated by racial pride and arrogance ; a feeling of satisfaction at belonging to a nation which is greater, or is thought to be greater, than other nations ; satisfaction at exercising dominion, real or assumed, over a quarter of the globe ; satisfaction at being able to bid defiance, and if need be to challenge ; in short, pride of place, prestige and power. And of such, ignoring the moral offensiveness of pride, the question can be pertinently asked—May not that pride be gratified at too high a price ? Is it worth taxing ourselves to this enormous extent mainly to indulge in a morbid and paltry sentiment which has been, not perhaps too severely, described as the “never failing vice of fools ?” Reasonable men can give but one answer to such a question : to unreasonable men, such as those who

¹ See pages 8-9.

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were prepared to fight the Boers to the bitter end, though it cost not 250 millions but ten times that amount, it would of course be useless to put the inquiry. But the majority of men in their calmer moods, and when not under the influence of passion such as war provokes, are more or less influenced by common sense, and are in the habit of counting the cost ; and there is, therefore, little reason to doubt that if their illusions as to the facts can be dispelled and they can once be brought to realise the gravity of the situation, there would be a considerable abatement of Imperial ardour.

Obviously it is primarily important that we should avoid everything calculated to add to the burden, whether further territorial aggrandisement, or granting bribes to our colonial possessions, or courting the hostility of other nations. We must, therefore, absolutely reverse the policy by which we have been dominated for many years past, emphatically veto the latest proposed development of that policy, and honestly endeavour to cultivate international friendship and goodwill ; for in this way only can we hope to prevent a growth of expenditure. Mr Morley has suggested an Empire might be described as a State system that ruins itself by wasting its capital¹; and if we wish to escape ruin we must cease to waste our capital, and no longer allow ourselves to be dominated by the spirit of empire. What benefit we are ever likely to derive from our latest conquest, which has so largely contributed to our present incubus, would be as difficult to discover as the converse benefit we are ever likely to confer upon those

¹ *Speech at Montrose, April 13, 1903.*

we have conquered. Imperialism is twice cursed, it curses him who takes and him from whom is taken ; it is the rape of liberty which leaves " lust, the thief, far poorer than before." Self-interest, not less than the golden rule, bids us stifle earth-hunger, aggressiveness, and vindictiveness ; we must recognise the right of others to the freedom and independence we claim for ourselves ; we must abstain from insult, injury, and provocation, and aim at promoting cordiality, friendship, and brotherhood amongst nations.

But we can attain, at any rate eventually, more than the negative result of not adding to our burden ; we can take active steps to lighten it. The resuscitation of the Sinking Fund is an obligation we owe to posterity, and ought to be discharged in a more liberal spirit than is proposed ; but of course this, so far from diminishing, in fact increases for the time being the demand upon our resources. Of the methods of effecting a reduction, the most important is to cut down our military and naval expenditure—an expenditure which Imperialism has caused to mount by leaps and bounds and which, as has been indicated, could be materially abridged if we curbed the spirit of aggrandisement, and still further abridged if we adopted a less defiant attitude to other Powers and paid more regard to international comity. In pursuance of this object we should seek firmly to establish friendly relations with other countries ;¹ should co-operate with them—having regard to our

¹ The recent Treaty with France is a notable step in the right direction—but for this we are probably largely indebted to the benignity and tact of His Majesty.

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status, we could indeed take the initiative ¹—in any movement for the reduction of armaments; and should steadfastly uphold the principle of arbitration, and endeavour to dispel (a difficult task, it must be admitted) the distrust due to our breach of the spirit of the Hague Convention almost before its ink was dry. Of the need of War Office reform it is scarcely necessary to say a word after the Report of the Commission on the War in South Africa, but the moral is that reckless militarism begets extravagance, incompetence, and waste, and that nations which engage in robbery must expect to be robbed in the process. It is a fitting incident in a campaign of blundering and plundering—blundering in the Cabinet, blundering in the field, plundering of territory, and plundering of independence—that the like blundering and plundering should extend to the incidental equipment; but if a tithe of the indignation expressed at the depredations affecting ourselves had been expressed at the depredations affecting others, it would have been more to the purpose. Certain it is, however, that we can, if we like, practise an extensive economy in two directions, namely, in the reduction of outlay and in the avoidance of waste. Upon both these points, as well as upon the general policy of pacification, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach may again be appropriately quoted, since the counsels of a Conservative and Imperialist, and one who has had control of the public

¹ A proposal made by Sir John Brumell was carried unanimously at the Peace Conference held in Vienna in 1904, to the effect that the Committee of the Hague Conference should be called together to recommend what steps might wisely be taken to reduce the naval and military expenditure of the great European Powers.

purse, may command attention on the part of some of those with whom party or patriotic bias discounts appeals to pure reason.

"He had always told his constituents that he was not in favour of the maintenance of a large permanent army in this country. He did not believe it was necessary. He looked upon our fleet as our great defence. But he knew very well that such a sentiment would arouse the deepest indignation on behalf of the service members of the House of Commons and military experts. . . . There might very easily be a reduction in our military estimates . . . if the War Office properly expended their money. He doubted if there was any one outside that Office who believed that they did.¹ . . . 'There is a great difference between an effective and an expensive army. One may have a military system which is perfect, and which at the same time is founded on wise economy. The military establishment which we sanction should be a model rather than a force adequate to any great occasion which might hereafter arise.' . . . More than this, let them all remember that the safety of the country depended not only upon our material strength, but upon our policy. . . . Let us carry out the golden rule of doing to others as we would wish them to do to us. Let us, while keeping our powder dry, be careful to avoid provocation, whether of word or action. Let us estimate at their true value, which was nothing, the vapourings of the sensational press, whether at home or abroad, and let us not always consider it a menace or an injury to ourselves if a foreign nation followed our own example by founding some station for the benefit of its trade, or even annexing a certain territory in a country which hitherto in barbarous hands had yielded nothing to the welfare of mankind. Whatever our wealth, and whatever our strength, it was on that policy, and on that policy alone, that the welfare of our people

¹ This was spoken before the publication of the Report of the South African War Commission.

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could be secured and the greatness of our Empire maintained.”¹

This much is clear ; if we are to be saved, we shall have to work out our own salvation. To our Colonies it is vain to look for help ; and, although we are bound to defend them if attacked, and although they identified themselves with us in our last gigantic Imperial enterprise, there is at least this to be said on their behalf, that they did not create our National Debt, that they have not the slightest control over our expenditure, and that they possess no effective voice in the determination of our policy. Certainly they give not the slightest indication of an intention to come to our assistance ; and whilst tradition, kinship, and the ties of race partly operate in the direction of maintaining the *status quo*, there seems little doubt that their allegiance is largely based upon self-interest, and that if and when they thought it to their advantage to sever the connection, they would not hesitate to sever it.

Is this rank heresy ? Then listen to the colonial view as expounded by a colonial :—

“ It is the present writer’s opinion that unless a reconsideration of the relations between the two great sections of the Empire—the Islanders and the Outside—is made, unless the Englishman is prepared to . . . abdicate some part of the title of ‘Predominant Partner,’ which the history of the past has naturally enabled him to assume, this vast agglomeration called the British Empire will prove to be not a living organisation but a mere aggregation of units, bound together by no common tie, and

¹ *Speech at Bristol, September 29, 1902.*

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liable to destruction at the first moment of stress. . . . [The Colonies] must either be taken into the joint business on terms that recognise their responsibilities and also their rights, or they must withdraw and set up business for themselves. 'But,' says the Englishman, 'that happily cannot occur. The Colonies have shown their loyalty to us in unmistakable terms: they sent us contingent after contingent with the utmost readiness and enthusiasm. If a war broke out to-morrow they would unhesitatingly throw in their lot with us.' That is a pleasant and a comfortable faith. The only unsatisfactory point about such a complacent bulwark of self-satisfaction is that such a belief is quite unfounded. Here the Englishman suffers from that radically wrong point of view which apparently is the inevitable result of his regrettable insularity. The Colonies are not loyal to *England*. The fact has been insisted upon again and again; apparently it is necessary to insist upon it till the end. . . . No, the loyalty to his own particular island, of which the Englishman is so assured, does not exist save in a complacent belief due to a wrong sense of the colonial's opinion of him. . . . And it is surely unnecessary to point out that in the event of a vital difference between the United Kingdom and one of its unfranchised Colonies the loyalty towards England would not survive five minutes after the first angry word was spoken. Then the Motherland would have an opportunity to test the loyalty of its colonials—to themselves, to each other. And in a large conflict of opinion between England and any of her great colonial governments, there is little doubt in the minds of those who know colonial feeling that the event would be the signal for an outbreak of sympathy between the Colonies directed *against* the Mother Country. . . . It must be quite apparent to such an astute statesman as Mr Chamberlain that he cannot hope to obtain one penny from the Colonies without proffering them some very real privilege in exchange. How, then, is he going to induce the Colonies to take upon themselves the burden beneath which the United

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Kingdom is so pathetically staggering? Certainly not by an appeal to their gratitude. The Colonies, though swift in sympathy and generous in their charities, are not of a grateful frame of mind. They have too confident a belief in themselves to admit that there is need of their gratitude. The colonial is assured of his ability to protect himself, and of the splendid future before his colony. He is a grown man now, with a man's conceptions of his advantages."¹

The remedy propounded by the writer of the above for averting the threatened disruption (he exhibits no enthusiasm for reciprocal tariffs) is the establishment of an Imperial Federal Council for Imperial affairs consisting of a lower chamber in which the United Kingdom would possess twenty representatives and the Colonies six, and an upper chamber in which the United Kingdom would possess nine representatives and the Colonies twelve, the two houses in case of conflict to sit as one, giving the United Kingdom twenty-nine votes to eighteen; the apparent effect of which would be to make Ireland master of the situation (what an opportunity for "wiping off old scores"), since a transference of her five votes to the Colonies would leave Great Britain with a bare majority of one, and of course result in an *impasse* if not in disintegration. What, however, here concerns us is the frank avowal that the Colonies are not loyal to the Mother Country, that they pursue their own interests, that they would stand by each other against Great Britain, and that they can face the possibility of severance with equanimity.

¹ "A Colonial View of Colonial Loyalty." By Arthur H. Adams. *The Nineteenth Century and After*, October 1903, p. 525.

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Nor can it be truthfully retorted that this is an isolated opinion, for there are many indications that it is ~~not~~ far from accurate. It is a reflex of Australian sentiment; and almost simultaneously there comes evidence of a similar sentiment on the part of Canada, where geographical, commercial, economical, racial and social conditions point to the contingency of an ultimate union with the great American Republic. Says Dr Goldwin Smith:—

“The tie which binds Canada as a dependency to the Imperial country has, by successive concessions of self-government, been worn thin. . . . Canadian writers bewail the betrayal of Canadian interests to the Americans by the weakness of British diplomacy. . . . It is affirmed by some that the sentiment of Canadian nationality and of recoil from connection with the Americans has of late been on the increase. . . . National sentiment in the proper sense of the term is out of the question, Canada not being a nation but a colonial dependency; unless, indeed, there is an anticipation of independence. . . . Of actual shrinking from association with Americans, social, commercial or industrial, there is no visible sign. . . . There is, however, no danger of violent or precipitate changes unless Great Britain should be induced to declare war against the United States.”¹

The Australian suggestion of an Imperial Council, as a means of promoting unity, would apparently not meet with substantial support in Canada; for Dr Smith indicates that, although Imperial Federation has been preached by a small but enthusiastic party for many years, it has never assumed a tangible shape; whilst as regards the new fiscal proposals, he inquires what reason there is for

¹ “Canada, the Empire and Mr Chamberlain.” *The Monthly Review*, October 1903, p. 38.

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presuming that all parts of the Empire ought, in defiance of the indications of nature, and at great risk of incurring the commercial enmity of other nations, to be forced into a fiscal union. Another Canadian writer is strongly condemnatory of the "new Imperialism" and at the same time more outspoken as to the trend of events towards separation.

"I venture to think that Imperialists have done a good deal to weaken the British connection by bringing forward schemes that involve reactionary changes in our relations with Britain. It is always wise to let well enough alone. . . . The whole theory of the New Imperialism rests on the flimsiest sort of underpinning. In the first place the notion of a federated Empire, of a permanent union between the Mother Country and the Colonies, is based on the unsafe doctrine of 'once a Colony always a Colony'; on the supposition that Canada, for instance, is never to enter upon full national life, but is to remain, what she is now, an imperfectly developed organism. . . . We have been casting off, one by one, the regulation swaddling bands of a British Colony.¹ . . . We are satisfied with the existing connection with Britain, but are not going to permit the new Imperialists to degrade, to take away any portion of our self-government—not even the right to do wrong to ourselves; and certainly we are not at this day going to break with the faith and traditions of the New World so far as to serve as mercenaries in the Old. Our ambition, indeed, lies in quite another direction. We hope to grow in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man, so that when the time comes for us to proclaim our independence, we may start in the path of industry and peace, and continue therein to our

¹ "We are not accustomed," says Sir Wilfred Laurier, "to being dragooned in this country." *Speech in the House of Commons, Ottawa, June 10, 1904.*

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own advantage and the honour of the Anglo-Saxon name."¹

There is thus brought into relief one possible development by which the burden of Empire might be materially further lightened, namely, by the withdrawal of the most costly section ; whilst we get colonial testimony that the latest schemes of English Imperialists are calculated to hasten rather than retard the process.² It may of course be very impolitic, and even very wrong, for our children to think of renouncing the filial tie ; but to offer either admonition or rebuke would not alter facts, and unpleasant retorts might be provoked at censure on the part of a nation accustomed to pursue its own interests (or supposed interests) without regard to others, and to impose its will upon them when too weak to resist. The position, on the one hand, is that we incur a heavy expenditure partly for the protection of the Colonies, that the latter have no intention of sharing it, and are quite prepared to dispense with the protection ; and on the other (as we are told on high authority and not without reason), that we cannot continue for all time to incur the expenditure or make this inordinate sacrifice.

The possibility of separation is one which a " Little Englander " would scarcely dare on his own initiative even to hint at, and it is certainly not a consummation devoutly to be wished. But, since it

¹ " Canada and the New Imperialism." By E. Farrer. *The Contemporary Review*, December 1903, p. 761.

² The above, of course, refers to reciprocal tariffs ; but it may be added that Australian opinion as regards the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal equally tends in the same direction.

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is a possibility candidly recognised, both by Colonials and British Imperialists, to briefly suggest what it would mean, if realised, may not be unprofitable. Probably it would involve a loss of prestige, a diminution of influence, and a decrease of power. Yet, seeing the shock administered in South Africa to our prestige, influence, and power, the experience would not be new, and apparently would not even be chastening. The alteration in the political status would be more sentimental than substantial, for our Colonies are now "independent sister nations,"¹ not controlled by us; and, unless the termination of our nominal suzerainty resulted from previous ill-feeling, there is no reason why the sisterly regard should diminish. Kinship, at any rate, must remain; and even now we could as ill afford to quarrel with our American cousins as with our Colonial brethren. But progress, after all, consists in paying less regard to racial ties and more regard to the common bond of humanity. What is race, that men should range themselves in hostile camps, according to their petty distinctions, and ignore the great fundamental community of interest of all human beings? We ourselves are composed of diverse elements and not a little of our virility is due to the fact. Our very language, on which the "larger hope" of the unity of the "English-speaking race" is founded, exhibits the like characteristics; and why those whose speech is the result of a somewhat different blend should be excluded from this larger hope is not easy to understand. Defoe, who in his caustic *True-born English-*

¹ This, it may be recalled, is Mr Chamberlain's description of them. See p. 7.

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man unkindly describes our progenitors as "an amphibious ill-born mob," tells us that they left a "shibboleth upon our tongue,"

"By which with easy search you may distinguish
Your Roman-Saxon-Danish-Norman-English,"

and the satire is worth reviving. The emphasising of racial variations by so composite a people as ourselves is not without its humour, but it has its grave aspects in being distinctly antagonistic to the nobler ideal. In any case, if we are to base union upon kinship, let it be a kinship of affection and not of selfishness. That our Colonies should remain attached to us and we to them, every one must desire; but if the attachment is to be made the subject of bargaining, and is to result in antipathy to the foreigner, it is robbed of its ethical value. Certain it is that, if we are wise, we shall in no case take upon ourselves a greater share of the burden of Empire; if we cannot continue to make this inordinate sacrifice, if we cannot "go on in this way," it is clear that we must not add to the sacrifice, and must find a more excellent way. And that way we must devise for ourselves.

Whilst our Colonies exhibit no inclination to come to our rescue, it is, we have seen, equally vain to turn our eyes to India. Although we do rule that impoverished country, we cannot in all conscience attempt to exact more than we do, even if it were possible to exact more. Indeed, our obvious duty is to exact less, and to initiate such reforms in government as shall afford material pecuniary relief. In doing this we need not increase our own

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taxation,¹ for whilst India is "bled," the British taxpayer, as has been indicated,² does not derive benefit from the bleeding. But, at the same time, he cannot and ought not to look to India for any relief; she is not responsible for the burden, has had no voice in its creation, and is prostrate under her own burden. With all our pride of possession and glory of dominion, we stand alone, a weary Titan staggering under the too vast orb of our fate; there is none to help us in our "splendid isolation," and amelioration can only come from ourselves.

Empire, as has been previously pointed out,³ means bondage not less for the Imperial than for the subservient race. In dictating to others we ourselves succumb to a dictator; in fostering parasitism we become its victims; in imposing our yoke upon the weak we tax our own strength. And Empire has always spelt decay, if not ruin; Athens, Sparta, Rome, Spain, all tell the same tale. Militarism, by which alone dominion is maintained and expanded, eats into the heart of the Empire.

We have vast wealth, abundant internal resources, and bright potentialities—a goodly heritage which cannot be squandered in a day. We can no doubt make long the broad road that leads to destruction; but the destination is the same, and must ultimately be reached if we pursue the journey. Or we can, if so determined, arrest our steps; we can to some extent regain lost ground, and we can seek a nobler

¹ In equity, however, we ought ourselves to bear a considerable portion—at least 5 millions—of the Indian "Home Charges."

² See page 293.

³ Pages 33-35.

path. Our safety lies where our honour lies ; not in fostering empire, dominion, predominance ; but in promoting autonomy, liberty, brotherhood. Egoism, not less than altruism, bids us abjure the doctrine of Racial Supremacy.



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PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPYERS,
EDINBURGH



